

# ARTFORUM

## Dan Finsel

PARKER JONES

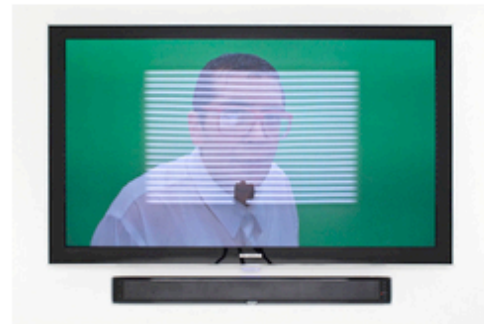
510 Bernard Street

December 12–January 24

Dan Finsel's solo debut features "Finsel," an evolving character the artist invented in 2008, now at the center of his practice. In the video *I Would Love Farrah, Farrah, Farrah (I)*, 2009, the charming, infantile maladroitness wears an oversized shirt and red glasses while rehearsing lines borrowed from the late Farrah Fawcett and the *Beverly Hills, 90210* character Brenda Walsh in a range of affectations, mostly shades of discomfort. Finsel's hilariously pathetic monologue, captivatingly performed, is both a means of working through childhood trauma and a screen test for the character's unfolding life drama. After self-counseling through breakups and a near-death experience, it culminates in the apotheosis of Finsel as Fawcett, coyly grinning.

Although Fawcett and Walsh play the roles of Finsel's pop-culture mother and sister, his fathers are art historical, as invoked by a highly considered installation. White vinyl flooring extends into the gallery office in a nod to the architectural interventions of Michael Asher. Opposite the video monitor, a Flavianesque horizontal swath of fluorescent lights implicates the beholder in Finsel's identification game by making the video legible only within the body's shadow when viewed straight on. Framed tightly against a green screen, Finsel himself awaits the viewer's psychic projections.

While Finsel's quirky mannerisms and identity mutations resonate with Ryan Trecartin's madcap characters, this exhibition is distinguished in its commitment to the evolution of a singular, complex figure. If indeed the artist's millennial generation oscillates between irony and sincerity, Finsel's appropriated melodrama strives in a one-way direction toward seriousness in its characterization of the means and stakes of identity formation today.



Dan Finsel, *I Would Love Farrah, Farrah, Farrah (I)*, 2009, color video, 20 minutes 24 seconds. Installation view.

— Natilee Harren