

ARTFORUM

Frank Magnotta

JUNIOR PROJECTS

139 Norfolk Street

January 11–March 8

Frank Magnotta's previous corporate logo conglomerations, surreal architectural mash-ups of text and ornamental design, are impressive on technical merits alone, but have also raised issues with the global hegemony these companies wield. His figurative graphite drawings on view here hint at the controversial legal concept of corporate personhood, a theory that riled hecklers in 2011 at one of former United States presidential candidate Mitt Romney's campaign stops when he said, "Corporations are people, my friend." For these works, Magnotta uses an underlying collage of logos from the mid-1960s and '70s as a starting point for his detailed cartoony renderings of individuals whose features take the same form as those images. In addition to Magnotta's intricate shading technique, his use of sepia ink, often as a stain, gives his outlandish depictions a quality reminiscent of an antique photograph.

Using the United States Bicentennial, in which patriotic celebrations transformed a country reeling from a post-Vietnam War malaise, as a connecting thread, many of Magnotta's characters take on performative roles to commemorate the event. In *Co-Patriot* (all works 2014), a portly man with a pipe hanging from his mouth dons garb resembling President George Washington, while the hippie in *Bicentennial Bob* sports a tasseled coat and an absurdly ornate hairstyle while holding a marijuana leaf. Others, such as *Debbie Double*, a grotesque multi-eyed caricature of a waitress serving a towering burger, speak more about America in general, where a determined working class soldiers on in unglamorous jobs to make the country hum along.



Frank Magnotta, *Silent Editor*, 2014, graphite and sepia ink on paper, 40 x 24".

— Chris Bors