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Online

ART

“Strange Days: Hit Pause”

By Andrea K. Scott



Courtesy Bailey Scieszka

New York’s indispensable alternative art space White Columns is a haven from the mainstream. It champions sparky unknowns who are just starting out and superb weirdos who’ve been overlooked. The intuitive gallerist Jackie Klempay runs Situations, on the Lower East Side, with the same ethos, which makes her the ideal person to curate an online exhibition from the White Columns Artist Registry—a digital trove of still and moving images submitted by hopefuls around the world, from Montana to the Marshall Islands. The eight alluringly devious works—by Dalia Amara, Alexandre Camarao, Faith Holland, Yue Nakayama, Eun-Ha Paek, Guillaume Adjutor Provost, Bailey Scieszka, and Lindsey White—in the show “Strange Days: Hit Pause” (on view at whitecolumns.org) were mostly made before the pandemic, but they feel eerily attuned to the moment. What better symbol of the queasy feeling of quarantined bodies and lives forced onscreen than Holland’s GIF of an iPad sprouting tendrils of hair? Scieszka, a Detroit-based phenom, steals the show with her fever-dream video “Fighting History with Lightning” (pictured), a seven-minute monologue by her unhinged alter-ego Old Put, whose All-American bloodline includes WrestleMania clowns, Jack Smith’s flaming creatures, horror-film demons, Hobby Lobby crafters, and conspiracy theorists.