

Louis B. James

Jeremy Couillard
My Time in the Cult of Melting Ancestors



April 21- May 31, 2013
Opening Sunday April 21, 6:00 to 8:00

A Japanese playing card company, loosely translated as *Leave Luck to Heaven*, develops a video game based around a new mythology where its participants become two Italian plumber brothers, who, by undergoing a Joseph Campbell-style hero's journey through giant green pipes, are transported to a realm of evil turtle beings and anthropomorphic mushrooms. They discover in themselves god-like powers through plants, fungi and astral guidance, as they travel through realms, or worlds, under, on, and above ground. Dark worlds, day worlds, ice worlds, worlds on treetops, worlds underwater. The brothers can break brick walls with their heads, jump on bullets, walk through walls and go down hidden tubes; they accumulate coins to purchase their reincarnation and climb secret plants hidden in boxes to walk on clouds. In lava-soaked, labyrinthine brick castles they battle giant turtle soldiers in order to rescue a human princess, who is always in another castle and replaced with a mushroom man. They finally find her in the 8th world, after completing something perhaps similar to the Buddhist 8-fold path.

Mario is the first hero created in the computational realm. At his core he is binary numbers, code, and logic gates. He is electrons travelling through a Ricoh 2A03 8-bit processor. Through all of us he was brought to life by manipulating an early Christian symbol of the cross and two red Japanese suns on a controller hooked up to a minimalist grey box reminiscent of Robert Morris plugged into a glass tube of deflection coils and electron guns. Children sat in dark rooms engaged in the first of many computational cultist rituals under the glow of the cathode containing images of the plumber hero who could be almost telepathically controlled. Soon Mario embarked on a myriad of adventures to new worlds: riding egg-eating baby dragons; battling robed ghosts, naked ghosts, and other increasingly complex enemies. Then Game Boy came out: the first portable computational mythology. Soon after, Mario discovered the mathematical third dimension, began jumping through paintings to enter his worlds. He climbed mountains, went to new planets and galaxies, discovered computational gravity, and began to collect crystals along with coins.

Mario is an analog for lo-fi spirituality and digital age mysticism. His cosmology is every bit as cryptic as the Popol Vuh, as Vedic rituals or symbolic flesh eating, though from the beginning his story is one we don't believe but in which we are every bit as invested.

Jeremy Couillard (b. 1980, Livonia, MI) lives and works in New York. He received his MFA from Columbia University in 2012. *My Time in the Cult of Melting Ancestors* is his first solo show in New York. His work was recently included in a group exhibition entitled *Game Show* at the Gallery at Florida International University. His work will be on view concurrently with this exhibition at the Red Bull Music Academy in New York (redbullmusicacademy.com.)

Louis B. James is located at 143b Orchard Street, NYC. The gallery is open from Wednesday through Saturday from 11:00 to 6:00 and on Sunday from 12:00 to 6:00. For more information please call (212) 533 4670 or email rj@louisbjames.com.