

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

office
**Reflections on David Rappeneau are
Hazy Dreams**

September 10, 2025



David Rappeneau, *Untitled*, (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery. Copyright: David Rappeneau

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

I, like many of his followers, feel as if I'm living inside David Rappeneau's head, refreshing a live news feed coming from somewhere I'll never fully reach. I don't know the artist. No one really does. Posts appear, mutate: *this drawing is almost done, taking a break now, it'll be up in an hour*. Then a threat: *50k likes or I quit drawing*. He hasn't quit yet, though he's posted that he's considering moving to the countryside and becoming a cult leader. I might join. Hopefully he loops me in if it happens.

His Instagram, @mitsubishi_uji_financial_group, reveals almost nothing of the artist's personal life, an absence that makes his world feel unnervingly real. Twitter stays silent. Tumblr, under princediabond, is a mist of Schiele-esque skinny legends, cigarette smoke, and gothic dreamscapes. It's like dozing off on a fire escape mid-high while the city burns, and waking up an angel as someone yells they can see up your skirt from the street below. The only personal traces the artist leaves are a few fleeting, ephemeral images from a trip to Japan. But, maybe that's the point: stop imagining him, keep talking about the work.

In an attempt leave the veil unpierced, I spoke with those who know Rappeneau's practice. Followers, collectors, collaborators. Even they seemed caught in a slightly sick, indulgent dream when they described him, their displaced memories of his work clinging close to the heart, close enough to rip it out and hand it over, allowing Rappeneau to sketch them a new one on a scrap of skimpy lingerie.

A common trick of the graffiti world lesser seen in gallery spaces, anonymity is rare: Daft Punk, Elana Ferrante, MF Doom, the occasional Caravaggio in exile.

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

Rappeneau belongs in that lineage, not through absence but through distortion. Since his first show at Queer Thoughts, he has bent our sightlines into warped POVs. Brand names like Armani, Coca-Cola and Balmain flatten into labels that act less like endorsements and more like portals. The clothes become characters, and the world—not the work—starts to warp.

Charlie Fox, artist, feral animal, and writer of essay for American Art Catalogues' David Rappeneau
[@ghostwoodfox](#)

Cooke Maroney from Gladstone asked me to write a press release for David's first solo show with the gallery in Brussels. This was deep in the Covid lockdown era, maybe spring 2020. When I saw the artist's work, I was immediately hot for it. Or maybe haunted by it. I mean, I never thought somebody would mate the drug-blitzed urchins from the Corinne Day pix I remember swooning over when I was a teen with Dürer's angels and animé and throw them all into our contemporary dystopia with woozy K hole distortion on top but David did and it's magical.

All the numinously glowing stuff of now is there, like the iMessages in kanji and the Balenciaga bags and the vape smoke in neon light. And somehow it's about the sadness deep inside the texture of living online, but it's also whispering about ancient stuff: grief, loss, angel-hood, the body in its beauty and its strangeness, and melancholy, too. I always feel something religious in David's work or maybe its ghost. Something about the possibility of ecstasy and transcendence within being

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

fucked up... or just within fucking or within grief. Pass the Bataille. Of course, I can't know for sure. David's a man of mystery, too— what's not to love?

Another story, that is possibly tragic: I wrote this big essay/story for David's catalogue narrated by a model who's mourning her dead boyfriend while leafing through the same catalogue, watching that Bresson movie, *The Devil, Probably*. Which, to me, is the most David movie possible. It's about this hot teenage nihilist called Charles who wants to kill himself. All his friends in the movie are hot and awfully depressed, too, and they're acting like they're zonked on opioids which was just Bresson's style but it's also very now, obviously. It's not really 'about' Catholicism but haunted by it, ecocide, and the looming apocalypse... It's a movie about wanting to be an angel. David should remake it or maybe he already has.

Anyway, he named his next show after I wrote that piece, *The Devil, Probably*. And every once in a while, somebody will DM me about that story to tell me it traumatised them in a great way and I just feel thrilled about the whole thing. I guess me writing about him works somehow because we both make work about these fantasy images of drugs and sorrow and romance, dreams about a certain kind of beauty, how they formed and deformed you, and how they broke your heart. If I meet him, I'll bring him roses and ask him to draw them for me and the petals will look like pieces of stained glass.

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.



David Rappeneau, *Untitled*, (2025). Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery. Copyright: David Rappeneau.

Sam Lipp, artist, curator, and previous director of Queer Thoughts gallery

[@shoplifting](#)

I first discovered David's work as he was making a stylistic breakthrough around 2014, developing from digital drawings with manga influence to works on paper in a more expressionistic figuration, and eventually refined into the sleek graphic style that has become his signature. It felt electric to witness the depth of his imagined subjects, which combined the bold talent of his hand with an intellectual elan and a sick sense of humor. I immediately wanted to exhibit the works at the

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

original Queer Thoughts location in Chicago, and David soon agreed. He sent us the works in a manilla envelope and we hung them on the wall with tape, unframed. The show was an instant hit, and the works from that period remain some of my all time favorites.

The truly canny quality in David's work is his unflinching deadpan. The indifference of his disaffected characters mirrors the intransigent withholding of his public persona. The impressive powers of his practice are consistency and refusal: consistency of format, materials and scale; and his refusal of biography, language, the public, canvas. His formal constraints allow him a greater creative freedom. His work inspires the possibility to excavate fully realized worlds that lie deeper than what's bobbing on the aesthetic surface.

David's work has always caused a frenzy, from outrage to intrigue and covetous lust. During the first solo show, a duo of hothead NYC dealers who were also a romantic couple called us incessantly seeking his work, and informed us they were "holding each other crying in bed," hoping to acquire David's work.

I also can't help but love David's frequent use of bathrooms and bathhouses as a psychologically potent and seductive setting for his scenes.

Danijela Nedeljkovic, mathematician and artist

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

@danijela_nedeljkovic_art

My first impression of David's work was that it felt both intimate and unsettling. His figures seemed to carry stories that were unfinished, like fragments of a dream you can't quite remember. In David's drawings I recognize the same fragile intensity that I seek in my own work. He finds it through figures and stories, while I explore it through digital collapse and glitch. Both approaches search for human presence inside disruption.

What drew me into his drawings was that sense of tension — how something so carefully rendered could still feel unstable and fragile— but what has always stayed with me is the vulnerability in his characters. There's a quietness in their expressions, even when the environment around them feels heavy or chaotic. That paradox of stillness inside turbulence is something I often think about when I'm working.

Sometimes, I imagine his characters stepping into the digital spaces of my own work. The idea of them wandering through a glitch or getting lost in a collapsed system always makes me smile — it feels like our practices could overlap in some parallel world.

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.



David Rappeneau, *Untitled* (2024). Courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery. Copyright: David Rappeneau

Mindy Rose Schwartz, sculptor, figurine collector, and installation artist

[@mindyroseschwartz](#)

In 2015, I was invited to have a two person show with David Rappeneau at Queer Thoughts in New York, and it was the first time I came to realize that he was anonymous. I'd been showing with the gallery since their early days in Chicago, and had been in group shows with Rappeneau before. But, his anonymity really

GLADSTONE

Julia Silverberg, "Reflections on David Rappeneau are Hazy Dreams," *Office Magazine*, September 10, 2025.

dawned on me when I met with Sam and Miguel to set up the show, and they were his stand-ins, helping make decisions on where things should hang and what goes where. When our work was installed, I could really see the appeal of taking the artists out of the mix. I respect that some people want to keep themselves more private. He's making a fantasy space with the work for the viewer to enter into, with or without assumptions about the artist. Between my alien farm animals and his friends in altered states, there were plenty of characters in the room.

I couldn't help but imagine who he was, what he looked like, and what he thought of our work together. At the opening I had a conversation with him in my head and tried to send him psychic messages about what the show was like in-person. Ultimately, I conflated him with the figures in his work. In my mind he is always wearing a high vis sweat suit.