

BULLETT

Behind Felix Bernstein's 'Bieber Bathos Elegy' at the Whitney Museum

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Photography: Ariele Max

On Jan. 15 and 16, New York-based artist Felix Bernstein opened up his spectral subconscious to a sold-out audience at the Whitney Museum NYC, his performance ranging from satirical opera to perverse web voyeurism. With the intention of anticlimax, the viewer's gaze was provoked through emotive mythological and pop culture imagery, making time appear non-linear and nostalgically psychotic.

Bernstein presented an homage to childhood trauma within a developing genesis. His visions were of an angelically volatile Justin Bieber, sparking a feeling of abandonment in distant ideals, where catharsis online is laced with click-bait and celebrity disassociation. The show featured many characters that embodied a palpable IRL esprit, like the band and chorus, led by avant-garde vocal artist Shelley Hirsch.

Performers wore Whatever 21, featuring pieces from existing collections, as well as some made exclusively for the production. Playing off Bernstein's sentimental aesthetic, garments responded in metamorphosis to fashion's evolutionary nature. With the collaboration of an edifying styling team, scrupulous art direction and Bernstein's long-time collaborator Gabe Rubin, the performance reflected an epoch where a post-new media adolescent breaches young adulthood and remains tethered to a place of mourning & uncertainty.





