

Tune In, Paint Out

The Facebook and Tumblr entity "Theories of deep understanding of things" has a series of photos it labels with the hashtag: #T.V. is the only love

Video media is changing. I think we can say Television is going away if not already gone. It is fading into memory. It has been, arguably, my most constant companion. I carry it with me. TV contributed to the way I see, both in form and content. My experience is common. There are students and entire departments of cinema and media studies all over the world studying it every semester.

This curatorial project brings together painters whose practices have ties to their experiences with Television and video screens.

Scott Stacks is a Chicago based painter. His paintings from around 2005 are large renderings of clips of night vision camera video imagery. The night vision instantly registers with the viewer as mundane surveillance -and at the same time critical or sinister. Through the images of Desert Storm and subsequent reporting, we have grown to be weary, when we see this form of image.. usually something violent will happen next. By freezing these images, Stacks calls that into question. His more recent abstracts are all the more fascinating in this light, seemingly exploring sequence and structure further.

John Fields recent paintings work in a very controlled gradation scale technique. The result is a surface anchored in paintings high and low tradition with a foot in printmaking or photoshop. Through the content of his representational imagery he addresses the way we watch movies, identifying with characters -in many cases all the characters. How does cinema spell out for us the fragility of our identity in such a pleasurable way? John's face is pasted onto all the characters in the historic scenes he pulls from such movies as "Godzilla" or "Last Tango in Paris". Through his play with these slips of personal and iconic identity, the viewer takes it another step again.

In Florian Heinke's paintings we realize how delicate and intimidate television can be in the most disturbing way, as it shows its violent and realistic side. We know it is a real event, shot by a real person, and it troubles us. It perhaps further troubles us that we can change the channel or turn off the set and go get a soda from the fridge. The world of news and conflict is fast, revolutions across the globe happen while the other side is asleep, peaceful. Mathew Brady's photos must have had some similar effect in their day. -But the universally available nature of the televised violence Heinke focuses on gives it another dimension and a constantly growing resonance. Through the black and white scale of Heinke's work these properties are brought into sharp relief.

Where as Heinke's work brings the riot from a distant city into our living room. Brian Bishop's work can reminds us of the moments we have experienced in that living room itself. Bishop makes paintings rooted in the way memory is shaped by video cameras. Through personal video recordings we can revisit moments, afternoons, houses, people. Bishop's work interestingly highlights the seemingly accidental shot, the swish and hover of the camera as it moved from event to event. Painting reinforces the property of stillness and intimacy such videos possess.

Anoka Faruqee's work reminds us of the screen of a TV after midnight, late in the 20th century; the MTV show 120 minutes, the screen one woke up to after falling asleep watching a VHS. Her experiments with translucencies and moiré patterns are a mix of the understandable and the magic.

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