

Re-Presentation

New York City is proud to present Re-Presentation: a survey of work by eight young artists dealing with various means of re-presenting existing artworks or representations of them. The work in Re-Presentation functions as a kind of portraiture of the relationship between the creator of the work, and the existing artwork they are referencing whether their interaction with the existing artwork is facilitated through an exhibition, a book, a website, a lecture, or having created the work being referenced themselves in the past.

The work featured in Re-Presentation takes a variety of approaches to dealing with the existing artwork that is being referenced ranging from collaging pictorial representations of artworks together, to rendering a photographic document of an artwork in paint, to photocopying an actual art object.

Forrest Nash's works in Re-Presentation apply a sort of grammar we are accustomed to seeing in poetry to a visual language. If within the language of painting the most base-level/irreducible gesture is the stroke, then in poetry it is the word. When a word is used within a poem, the reader is forced to grapple with all usages of the word they have ever encountered as well as that word's entire history. All of these associations and references tied to the single word are wrapped up and neatly enveloped within the brackets of the word, only to be unpacked later on during reading. In Nash's work, the history and associations tied to an existing artwork are enveloped into a singular gesture contained in the pictorial representation of the referenced artwork. This representation is then used within Nash's own artwork as a base-level gesture in the creation of a complete composition, similar to the hierarchical position of a singular word within a poem.

In *Untitled (After Kippenberger)*, Heather Guertin uses painting to translate a photograph of a Martin Kippenberger installation found in a book onto the surface of a canvas by re-interpreting the image through oil paint. Guertin's choosing to render a photographic image of an installation by Kippenberger in which he hangs the curtains that separate Coach Class from First Class on a commercial airline flight, through paint is interesting for several reasons when considering Guertin's relationship to painting. Like much of the work in Re-Presentation, Guertin's painting functions as a record of a negotiation taking place between the work of the artist, and that of their influences. We are all too familiar with the process of mimicking the work of a master artist as an educational exercise so that one can glean some sort of knowledge from attempting to recreate the exquisite mastery exhibited in the original, however here the relationship between artist-as-admirer and artist-as-historical-reference becomes far more complex. For Guertin who typically defines herself as a painter, to choose to create a pictorial representation of a work by a master painter, which is not in-fact a painting, is quite strange. In a traditional artist-admirer/artist-reference relationship, the medium stays intact, that is to say that if one wishes to learn to paint like Cezanne, they would create a painting after one of his. However this particular work by Kippenberger is not a painting, it is a ready-made sculpture that serves to show the way in which an object (curtain) is capable of functioning as a symbolic representation of a political divide. Mimicking the process Kippenberger enacted in the creation of this work, would rely less upon attention to color, texture, and composition (properties of a painting), and more upon specificities of the found-object's origin and it's relationship to class. Rather than mimic what Kippenberger has accomplished by recreating a piece that functions similarly, Guertin's painting robs Kippenberger's piece of it's criticality and replaces it with a sensitivity towards color, and cleaves it from it's relevance as a real world object capable of being socially dividing and replaces this with an ability to embody an attention to texture and composition. *Untitled (After Kippenberger)* takes the non-painting work of a painter admired by Guertin, and

forcefully shoves it back into the language of painting allowing all that does not directly translate to drop to the floor and all of the idiosyncratic grammar of painting to shine through.

Yogi Proctor's works in *Re-Presentation* were both produced by photographing prints of a fraudulent Vermeer painting made by the infamous Dutch art forger Han Van Meegeren, titled *The Disciples at Emmaus*. Proctor's works point to a form of production that rather than aiming to glorify or even reference existing artworks, aims to become the existing artwork. Where most paintings that mimic master paintings seek to praise the original work being referenced, the forgery would sooner climb into the original's home while it is asleep, cut its face off to be worn as a mask, only to live the rest of its life as the original. Proctor's work however is far more complicated than this, as the actual photographs we are presented with are a complex document not only of Van Meegeren's painting, but also of the life of the object and its distribution. The prints that Proctor used in these works are purchased from a poster shop owned by the great-granddaughter of Han Van Meegeren in Amsterdam. It is interesting to note that unlike many of the works by Forrest Nash seen in *Re-Presentation* which use images of actual artworks, Proctor's photographs are images of existing representations (prints), of an existing artwork (*The Disciples at Emmaus*). Proctor's photographs function as documents not only of Van Meegeren's *The Disciples at Emmaus*, but also as a portrait of the life of the painting that encompasses every step it has taken from the production of the original forgery, to its mass duplication as a print, to the shop owned by Van Meegeren's great-granddaughter where representations of the original would eventually pass into Proctor's hands.