



Night Regulation

Storytelling in the land of text, identity and pictures

February 2 – April 6, 2018

Opening Reception February 2, 6-9pm at Radiator Arts
10-61 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City, New York

Loren Britton, Maria Dimanshtein, Nicholas Fraser, JF Lynch and Andrew Prayzner
Curated by Patrick Neal

Different media comprising the visual arts like painting, drawing or sculpture have their own constitutive language. One can list off, color, line, value, texture, viscosity, composition as formal components with which an image reveals itself. So too, does literature in the form of morphology, syntax, phonetics and semantics. During the heights of Modernism it was sometimes considered a fraught ground to mix these two distinct

systems, diluting one at the expense of the other. In our more permissive art climate of the twenty tens, this sort of cross pollination between words and pictures is not only considered healthy, but essential to convey a climate of image saturation, global and digital networks, and physical and virtual modes of representation.

The aesthetic coexistence of words and pictures dates back to ancient cultures and reached a high-water mark with Conceptual Art of the sixties where linguistics sought to elevate idea over form. Text-based art of that period traded in philosophical puzzles that sought a distillation aimed at revealing the true essence of art. In the twenty-first century, this approach has proven to be too reductive, and the purview of words has come full circle, serving as verbiage, image and substrate. Without the imposition of a doctrinaire ideology, text based visual art straddles abstraction, figuration and conceptualism and the studio practice of artists cuts across a broad swathe of art history and media. Words and pictures are mined from the contemporary urban landscape as text messages, Instagram posts, Google and dark web searches, photos, research, ephemera and taxonomy, grant applications, philosophy, fake news, protest banners, computer bots, poetry, prose, novella pictographs, logos, graffiti, classifieds, dating apps, computer code, the Second Amendment, junk mail, phishing spam, fairy tales and cartoons.

Andrew Prayzner draws on sourced images like snapshots or postcards as subjects to ground his own paintings, then disrupts his compositions by scrawling words across the surfaces. Pictures of ambiguous locales or clichéd sunsets are paired with sharp, clear phrases; words like ESTEEM, DEVIL, FROG N SCORPION stylishly unfurl across the field of the painting. Private axioms writ large are mingled with hand painted, albeit sourced imagery, suggesting a quest for sincerity in the midst of a simulated mediascape. An authentic attempt at feeling and communication struggles against an ocean of mass production and the shortcomings and abuse of language to convey truth.

Loren Britton massages the poetic associations between words, paint and paper, into abstract works that tenderly contemplate the gender fluid body. Distinctly aware of the symbols and codification of sexual signification, Britton mingles color, texture and material with sign language, poetry, and notation in sensually evocative ways. Working within the spaces of shifting venues, time constraints, budgets and current events, they embrace a lo-fi craft and stay open to creative happenstance. For *Night Regulation*, Britton has created site-specific installation, where cursive hand written text, absorbed into paper pulp sculptures is set against a wall covering that utilizes the unique confines of the gallery.

The attempt to ignite romance through public message boards or dating apps, makes its way into **Nicholas Fraser's** *Left Hanging* series. Fraser, long interested in the variety of soulless junk communication (spam, phishing, bots, Internet dating) that pervades our lives, juxtaposes these with soulful attempts at human connection. Working with hanging banners, he cuts personal intimate correspondence into the surfaces that are equally sad and hilarious. Lit from above, and using warped letterforms and distorted blocks of text, his black, tyvek banners cast shadows with a permanence that rivals the fragility of the conversation. Other banners advertising Rap, Reggae and Bollywood performance are overlaid with letterforms in a "Tower of Babel" style mishmash that confuses public and private expression.

"Night Regulation" are the words found on signs along city streets warning drivers someone is watching and that their cars could be towed in the wee hours if they violate parking restrictions. It's also a delightfully

grandiose man-made proclamation, as if humans can control the heavens. This sort of hubristic ambiguity is not lost on the artist **Maria Dimanshtein** who likes to confront viewers with direct, existential truisms and d humor. Working in a monochromatic palette of black, white and silver, Dimanshtein arranges letters, words and phrases in sequential grids that read like prose poems or pages from children's books. Assembled in bookform, she arranges words next to symbols to convey the mundane and cosmic aspects of the human condition.

JF Lynch teases words into pictographs and drawings into primal utterances, digging for the precise point where the act of writing becomes the act of drawing. His works have an assertive physicality sometimes originating in studies from polymer clay letter maquettes; hybrids of art and text. Lynch is attuned to the creative revelations dislodged from idle wandering, disorientation, free association, brainstorming, and multi-tasking and organically cycles among charcoal on paper, modeled clay, photography, mural, relief assemblage and video. These different processes and materials literally rub off on one another and Lynch's large word drawings and sculptures dominate physical space, removing the barriers between writing, drawing, sculpture and site-specific installation.

Patrick Neal is a NYC based curator, arts writer and painter. In 2016, he organized *Beautiful Object: Upsetting Still Life* at Jeffrey Leder Gallery in Queens, NY, a show of contemporary still life painting and sculpture. He served as curator of the Chocolate Factory's art gallery in Long Island City, NY during the Spring and Fall Seasons of 2007. Neal is a contributing writer for *Hyperallergic* and has written monographs on artists Franklin Evans, Zoe Pettijohn Schade and recently Scott Schnepf for *Tether* arts journal. Neal's own painting and catalog essay will accompany the upcoming exhibition, *The Nature Lab* at LABspace in Hillsdale, NY and he will have a solo show at the Oresman Gallery, Smith College, Northampton, MA in December 2018.