

ASPECT / RATIO

Press Release:

ASPECT/RATIO

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GLEN FOGEL *More Recent Video*

Friday, October 25 – Friday, December 6, 2013

Opening reception for the artist: Friday, October 25, 6-8 p

Recent Video, Corrine Fitzpatrick

I know what “nothing” means, and keep on playing. -Joan Didion

“Against my better instincts, I opened one of the links,” Jon Lee Anderson writes in a recent post for The New Yorker’s blog. Anyone with Internet access and a little time to kill knows the score: The following contains graphic material; Inappropriate for young audiences; Viewer discretion is advised.

In recent years, by some accounts beginning with the broadcasted decapitation of the journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002, the web has been besieged with increasingly gruesome videos from the world’s battlefields. Suspension of disbelief—the sophisticated conditioning of the cinematic two centuries past—permutates into incredulousness. “This can’t be for real,” I think to myself, numbly scrolling through the scenes of torture and carnage that were uploaded weeks, days, or hours earlier and that have already pulsed through an infinite network of screens. Cognitively, I stutter and sense my empathy dislodge and hover adjacent to my emotional core and capacity for reason. It’s too much. It is too real. It is right here before my eyes and yet so disposable—the moving image. I collapse the browser and disconnect. Hannah Arendt’s figuration of the banality of evil comes to mind, trickled down to the hum-drum accessibility of bearing witness vis-à-vis YouTube. Anderson recounts, “Because of the poor bandwidth in Baghdad, the video continually cut out and began rebuffering, and so I watched the moment at which the Turkish truck driver began to die several times, before I gave up and stopped... I felt soiled by the act of watching.”

“I know what ‘nothing’ means, and keep on playing” is one of the last lines of *Play It As It Lays*, the novel Joan Didion wrote as the 1960s closed. Four decades on, we have the technological and consumer ability to become audience to pretty much anything. Captivated, we are relentlessly informed yet, perhaps, unprepared as a society to know what to do with what we can see. “Video, after all, is furniture, and has the protruding status of an object within living space,” Hollis Frampton writes in his 1974 text, *The Withering Away of the State of the Art*. “... The video field is continuous, incessantly growing and decaying before our eyes. Strictly speaking, there is no instant of time during which the video image may properly be said to ‘exist.’ Rather, a little like Bishop Berkeley’s imaginary tree—falling forever in a real forest—each video frame represents a brief summation within the eye of the beholder.”

ASPECT / RATIO

2

In 1965 Donald Judd wrote *Specific Objects*, an early *raison d'être* for what he categorized as the “the new three-dimensional work” that we now refer to broadly as minimalism. “In the three-dimensional work the whole thing is made according to complex purposes, and these are not scattered but asserted by one form. It isn't necessary for a work to have a lot of things to look at, to compare, to analyze one by one, to contemplate. The thing as a whole, its quality as a whole, is what is interesting.” The principles of “*Specific Objects*” have coursed, double-backed, and reiterated variably through art-making practices and critiques since Judd's time, but, when I look at current work that may refer to or resemble minimalism I find myself unable not to compare, analyze, and contemplate. As a person alive and thinking in 2013, I don't put a lot of stock in, nor do I desire, “the thing as a whole.” I presume that art of all varieties is made according to complex purposes and I consider discrete works in the manner of Frampton's video frame: a brief summation within the eye of the beholder. For an artist working today to make objects comprised of clean lines, uncluttered surfaces, and open space, one implication is inevitable: The viewer is invited to look at something that does not immediately represent, shock, or even inform. My head is too often full of afterimages of the daily atrocities I scroll through online. To look at art—to consider its surfaces, depths, and context—is to contemplate everything in an instant of relief.

Glen Fogel lives and works in New York. He received an MFA from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, Bard College. Fogel has had recent solo exhibitions at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Callicoon Fine Arts, New York, Participant Inc., New York, The Kitchen, New York, and Momenta Art, New York. He has been included in group exhibitions at Sikkema Jenkins, New York, Laurel Gitlen, New York, Maria Stenfors, London, The Power Plant, Toronto, and the 2002 Whitney Biennial, among others. His film and video work has screened widely at venues including the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, Toronto International Film Festival, MIX Film Festival, New York, London International Film Festival, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. He is currently a Visiting Artist-in-Residence at Bard College.

For further inquiries, please contact the gallery.