

CONDITIONS of DISPLAY : by Dan Milewski

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The Moore Space in conjunction with Locust Projects has recently opened a new show entitled Conditions of Display, in which guest curator Gene Moreno attempts to examine the various approaches of mostly younger artists as they take on the element of display strategies when exhibiting their work. When you first enter the Moore Space you are confronted with the work of Elena Penkova. The piece which is untitled consists of four canvases of varying sizes (none bigger than 30 inches) arranged in a row and leaning against the wall with the back of the canvas facing the viewer subsequently hiding the image that exists on the surface. It is accompanied by two house plants hanging at eye level above the paintings and a standard sheet of computer paper containing what I assume are print out images of the painted works. The work brings to mind the question of reality and virtual reality or perhaps better put the reality of the virtual; that is, why in a contemporary climate of global technology is it even required or necessary to enter a space to view a piece of work when one could view a reproduction online or via other resources perhaps in enlarged high resolution clarity in order to connect with a piece? The negative process of concealing the image and thus frustrating the viewer serves to make us conscious of the act of looking and this act is then rewarded by the print out image allowing us to see the work in a forum we find more familiar (a reproduction) as we may possibly find this familiarity more gratifying and rewarding than the actual piece itself.

This particular element of negation or perhaps the quality of the void seems to set the tone for the show, as the curatorial concept presents what is essentially a formal quality within contemporary art work as a theme. I mention the void as to recognize the fact that when we discuss the particulars of formal elements we are confronted with a myriad of possibilities which are followed by oblique circumstances for both curator and viewer: a reflexive position resulting in nothingness. These circumstances then become problematic, as a show based in formal discussions could arbitrarily be based on any encompassing element of an art works finality. I am not however attempting to critique the element of interpretation within art. At the risk of stating the obvious, the possibilities of interpretation when confronting a work of art are undoubtedly numerous but at the same time very particular and perhaps esoteric (depending on how you look at it) as the viewer projects their own personal narrative and individual cognition onto a piece as the natural viewing process occurs. The consideration of these two elements, the artist's injunction to relate to the viewer and the viewer's injunction to relate to the piece is an apriori condition of any relevant contemporary dialogue that has existed throughout art history.

What is at play in this show however is a zero of level of distinction about how the works relate to one another or to the space at large. It is possible to create connections between almost any contemporary works of art simply on the fact that they are created in a time period we consider contemporary and therefore contain socio-cultural aspects that are a product of that historical circumstance. This lack of specificity in the show forces the viewer to make obvious and sometimes arbitrary connections in the face of this meta-narrative of formal mutations that is a "condition of display". There is no doubt in my mind that the artist approaches their work from varying perspectives where display is concerned. Especially in a contemporary pluralistic any thing goes climate that the art world revolves around today. We can travel back in time as far as Duchamp to see the formative stages of a conscious effort to

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Elena Pankova

Untitled 2007. Oil on canvas, 23 x 19 inches.
Untitled 2007. Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 inches.
Untitled 2007. Oil on canvas, 35 x 29 inches.
Untitled 2007. Oil on canvas, 28 x 23 inches.

Courtesy of CANADA New York

approach the display method as part of the work in itself.

Containing mostly two dimensional works (paintings, large format photo, and small drawings) within the cluster of thirty five works at the Moore Space show we are also in a position to ask what's so inventive or radical about the display options of the particular works in the show. There are some interesting works in the show such as the fore mentioned piece by Elena Pankova, the videos pieces of Seth Price Modern Suite and 2 for 1/A Meal In Three Courses, and the diptych Space Domination by Eugenio Espinoza. However, the more socio-cultural or philosophical relations between any of the works in the show are repressed by the viewers desire to connect the already connected in the work's aesthetic qualities.