

Screen

Curated by Joshua Decter

January 19 – February 24, 1996

26 Wooster Street

Screen: it's all there to be seen. A painting show. A painting show on television. Television in a gallery. Different velocities of seeing. In life, as in art, things rub up against one another, and there's as much discord as flirtations. Contradictions abound, and linkages are proposed. Where, for instance, does the abstract or representational "space" of television end, and the abstract or representational "space" of painting begin? And vice-versa? In the realm of video, perhaps. Why do we watch television? For distraction and absorption. Why do we look at paintings? For absorption and distraction. And, of course, there is pleasure —the alternately rarefied and banal pleasures afforded by these distinct languages.

Today, it is possible to consider painting to be as much about distraction as television, and television to be as much about absorption as painting. Yet it's the notion of a third term which is most intriguing: an intermediary territory between the more discrete experiences that painting yields, and the more collective social experiences contrived by television. What are the worlds created by painting and television? Painting is a "screen" that transmits. Television is a "screen" that transmits. Television is a visual field that that absorbs. Painting is a visual field that absorbs. Television is all around us, it is a kind of social tissue. Painting removes itself partially from the discursive flow, yet it is also a form of social communication.

Television projects itself into and through the texture of everyday life. Painting is projected into the texture of everyday life, and creates a pause. Painting lays a trap for our looks, and our gaze is either laid into or laid upon the screen that is the canvas. Television reaches out to touch our look, our gaze, and we reach out to caress its immaterial material, ubiquitous glow.

"Screen" is a rhetorical gesture: a doubling of the exhibition inside the site of the exhibition. Prior to the opening, curator Joshua Decter worked with a photographer to shoot the installation according to a specific design, and the resultant photographic images were then digitized. These digitized pictures became the building blocks for a videotape that was produced and edited by the curator on an AVID system. The video re-constructs the installation, offering another way of seeing the painting show, in relation to television. The video is played on two television monitors within the gallery space. A third monitor offers regular television programming, with a remote control and a TV guide to offer selection possibilities and enhance general viewing pleasure.

For further information, please contact the gallery at info@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.

