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The Disjunctive Synthesis between Andre Weil AND Camburn/Schumacher

Connor Camburn & Ben Schumacher, curated by Eric Schmid

@Apartment 13 Gallery

Press Release:

While the historic avant-garde has been delimited by the modern art canon to stand as a catchall for a program of sensibilities and aesthetics that one associates with objects and gestures belonging to a distinct outgrowth of 20th century modernism, the residual objects, paintings, and treatises can also be looked at as operative vehicles for negotiating rapidly changing systems of information and material production that have only accelerated to this day. Through this consideration, there is a distinct through-line between the scientific and mathematical leaps of such thinkers as Einstein, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Neils Bohr, and Andrew Weil, and the artistic undertakings of characters such as Marcel Duchamp, Andre Breton, or later Joseph Bueys.

As the production of new knowledge systems in the hard sciences and mathematics advanced in the early to mid 20th century, in the realm of the arts, the process of material production was being interrogated, allegorized, and exhausted. In the same way that Einstein brought to the fore new understandings of relativity in respect to space and time, artists of the historic avant garde were dealing with the capitalistic conditions of reification, a process that in 1928 Georg Luckács observed “reduces space and time to a common denominator and degrades time to a dimension of space”. Both the realms of math and hard sciences and that of the arts were struggling with the confines of closed systems in which the production and re-production of knowledge systems and

new commodities were occurring rampantly: in the institutions on the one hand and in the factories on the other. During the regime of wartime capitalism in the first half of the 20th century, the very processes of observation and representation underwent paradigmatic shifts. In place of determinate legacy, and bereft of a substantial telos, the daily life of the bourgeoisie was to become a site of perpetual systems-management. Consequently, the role of the artist was to intervene in the space between systems governing thought and production and the downstream psychological and physical effects these were to have on the body.

The title of “The disjunctive synthesis between Andre Weil AND Camburn/Schumacher” is of course a disjunctive synthesis in itself, substituting Camburn and Schumacher for the philosopher Simone Weil who is commonly the subject of comparison to her brother, the similarly influential mathematician. This speaks to the other disjunction/synthesis that is happening in the work itself: whereas the artworks of the Surrealist/Dada conglomerates referenced in Camburn and Schumacher’s work during their time aimed to erode the boundaries between art and life, the works in this show reframe, splice, and problematize images of this historical art movement, eroding contexts of art and life at a second order in relation to the referent. The material being interrogated here is the production of historical aesthetics itself. The screenshots of text threads, the renderings of dollar bills, and the haphazard appearance of bygone dates all point to a dissociation of aesthetic currencies and their receipts. Camburn and Schumacher present us with a situation that is cramped; not only physically, but also in relation to place, time, allegory, and historicity.

-Laszlo Horvath