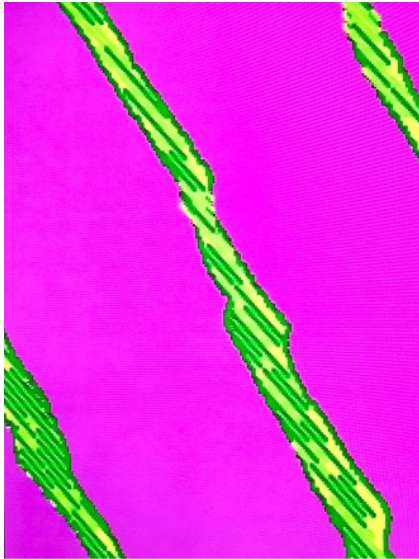


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IMITATION OF LITE

Cheryl Donegan

May 14th – June 18th, 2022

Opens Saturday, May 14th from 3-6pm

Painting seems to follow two things: light and technology. Firelight, the light of the sun, gaslight, the light bulb to work by, into the night. To imitate the effects of the light of the sun, its movement across the skies, in series, was something that paintings tried to capture just as the cinema was being born. Were the Cubists the first generation of artists who worked under light bulbs? Did that show them that light could shatter? That it cuts on and off? Picasso claimed to love the sharpness of artificial shadows. Electronic light is everywhere now: the horizon in the palm of the hand. Lite is everywhere, too. Lite is a lesser version, not of light, but of whole. Lite is an implied version of something else, an imitation. Lite is less so you can have more of it. Lite generates consumption and was born of its needs. At your fingertips: the illuminated screen, touch controlled, a light touch. One thing about making paintings and using screens, both count on touch. The Impressionists valued touch. Just when graphic and silvery images were everywhere, framing a second of time forever, painting too tried to capture the moment, rendering it a thousand points of light. The impression was made under the light of a blazing sun, letting the light in. As a kid, I had picture making toys- Spirographs, Etch-A-Sketch, ColorForms, Lite-Brite- toys of imagination with built-in obstructions. None were electronic, but all used narrow parameters to limit the pictures you could create. And everyone's pictures looked great. But it was meant to be unplugged, after all: a lighter version of refrigerator art. Lite can be weak, but it sort of needs to be, to be more. Painting is not an electronic screen, but it has the power to seduce other technologies into itself. Soft cloth and hard glass: Touch, tap, press, slide, swipe and drag across both surfaces. One blurs and bleeds, indelible.

Cheryl Donegan received her B.F.A. in Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design and an M.F.A. at Hunter College in New York. In her breakthrough videos of the 1990's, Donegan combined time-based, gestural media of performance and video with forms such as painting, drawing, and installation. Direct, irreverent, and infused with an ironic eroticism, Donegan's works put a subversive spin on issues relating to sex, gender, art-making and art history. Using her body as metaphor in her earlier works, Donegan's performative actions before the camera often resulted in or related to process paintings and drawings. More recently, Donegan's paintings derive abstraction from debased images of consumer objects and spaces. The roots of her performance practice can be traced to current forays in to fashion. As critic Nick Stillman writes in Art Forum: " Donegan's recent work remains acidic, but it has turned abstract." Her work has been exhibited internationally, most recently in her first career survey at Kunsthalle Zurich (summer 2017). In June 2018, Donegan opened another survey of her works from 2009 to present at the Aspen Museum of Art, traveling to Contemporary Art Museum in Houston in 2019. Other venues include a one person exhibitions at The New Museum, New York City (2016), the 1995 Whitney Biennial, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Tang Museum of Art, New York Film and Video Festival, 1993 Venice Biennale, and the 1995 Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, France, in addition to many individual and group exhibitions in Europe and America. Donegan was a faculty member in the Fine Arts Department at the School of Visual Art, New York from 1997-2013. She has been a seminar leader and guest critic at Yale University, was a faculty member at Skowhegan School of Drawing and Painting, Summer 2011 and a visiting artist/lecturer at numerous art programs in the United States. She lives in New York and in Istria.

The exhibition is on view by appointment only. For more information (including exact location) and images, please contact info@freddygallery.biz