

Press Release:

Hard Fork, Taslima Ahmed, Tatjana Danneberg, Joe W. Speier
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Hard Fork brings together three artists who crossbreed painting and the digital world. The exhibition's title references a programming term for the failure of a particular innovation and the need to start from scratch following its malfunction. From Deepfakes to Chat GPT, the natural world is increasingly consigned to and arbitrated by rapid technological innovation. Taslima Ahmed, Tatjana Danneberg, and Joe W. Speier each produce material interrogations of the art object, medium-specific possibilities, and authorship. Faces and the traces of process are consistent across the board; Ahmed's mechanical textures suggest skin, woodgrain and aggregated chains, visually upholding the printing methods through which they were accomplished. Danneberg *Olympics* sees a woman in profile with the residue of red paint dashed across. Speier borrows the visages of anonymous online users while collaging gestural attitudes across his compositions.

The problem of painting is well represented in the annals of post 1960s art historical record. If one is to dogear the medium's "death" in relation to the era of Warhol, then everything that has since followed can be consigned to a "living dead" status. Despite twentieth century cynicism, painting's ongoingness today can be attributed to its penchant for shape-shifting. Technological advancements in the 20th century's tail end also elicited new conditions for the medium to both navigate and pursue. The spawning of new painterly avenues gave wind to practices that trade in brushes and organic thought patterns for machine-driven production and ideation.

While these two frameworks - art and tech - have historically taken for granted as antagonistic forces, a host of artists continuously pursue the symbiotic potential between them. The mark and the gesture are ultimately called to question, as well as the problem of "authorship" and how one can claim it in the face of mechanically produced objects. Additionally, critics may hold that romance is divested from the medium as soon as a computer is introduced. However, one of the greatest contributing factors to a successful painting is the object's ability to ask more questions than it answers. If one takes this to be true, then it can be said the commingling of these elements opens the medium up to new territories for exploration.

The fertile ground borne from this intersection of painting and technology leads into Isabelle Graw's estimation that "a digitally produced form of aliveness" is not only possible, but is the active pursuit of contemporary artists (in this case she attaches the proclamation to Wade Guyton). Moreover, Ahmed, Danneberg, and Speier demonstrate that the medium remains sympathetic to ever-changing external forces, absorbitant and willing to metamorphosize at any juncture.

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