

Reena Spaulings presents eleven new works by Ken Okiishi. Painting directly onto flat screen television monitors, Okiishi instigates a situation whereby painterly gesture is put into immediate relation with media flow: home-recorded TV broadcasts serve here as under paintings that loop continuously behind the expressionist brushwork. Glimpsed through oily passages that may recall Joan Mitchell or even late Monet, digitized fragments of mid-1990s and early 2000s television (Touched By an Angel random cable access transmissions, a presidential debate with loser John Kerry, a Chine New Year pageant, old Chase bank, Quaker Oats and Frutels commercials, etc.) seem to emanate from an unreachably recent past now fossilized on the screen and in the work. This degraded techno-cultural content brings its own glitchy action and pixilated, pre-HD palette, which Okiishi responds to while painting, always working in direct interaction with the moving image. So multiple temporalities are now communicating: the archeological time of the original broadcast, the scrambled, non-linear time of the digital edit, the programmed repetition of the loop, and the living, breathing moment of painting. The finished works compose a drifting and unstable time-image while also complicating the act of viewing (or watch). Occasionally, the artist forgoes programmed content and paints against footage of blank video-blue screens, re-entering the Kleinian void. These paintings, each branded with the Samsung logo, also come with sound; playing back simultaneously in the gallery, they produce a chance composition of murmuring broadcast noise.

Using readymade televisions as his canvas, Okiishi seems to compress video and abstract painting into a single aesthetic channel. He also sets up a tense, comical face-off between mediums, as brushstrokes blot out the TV image and disrupt the communicative function of the screen. A gestural relationship to touch screens that's evolved via our interfacing with personal data is shifted back into paint jobs where it becomes strangely AbEx, but without giving up any of its everyday automaticity. What these plugged-in paintings foreground is the undecidedly active/passive attitude common to every user of contemporary and and information.

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