

CHAPTER NY

For immediate release

Carolyn Forrester

Loyalty Program

October 31 – December 13, 2025

*Thou art the one who followst me the best.
Thou art the one who follows me like a little dog.
Thou art the one who did follow me that day.
Thou art the one who didst follow me through trials.
Thou art the one who follows the law... the text.
Thou art the one who follows the mob.
Thou art the one who didst follow me.
Thou art the one who did follow me.
Thou art the one who art.
Thou art the one who is.*

— Jacques Lacan (trans. Russell Grigg), *Seminar III: The Psychoses*

Norbert Wiener, the father of cybernetics, put forward the following thought experiment: imagine a god, traveling in the opposite direction in time, trying to send us a message. "If he drew a square," Wiener wrote, "the drawing of the square would appear to us as a catastrophe." Something like this is at work in Carolyn Forrester's presentation at Chapter, *Loyalty Program*. Across her practice, Forrester draws from early abstract painting and Dada as an invocation of the dialectical leaps made in the progression of modernism. Today, what was avant garde in Duchamp's time appears to recede into the past. The works here account for what is left: the medium as a hyper-referential hall of mirrors and abstraction as an apt form for a world captured by financialization. Yet they also produce a remainder, distinct to Forrester: a touch of madness as both anger and frenzy, sound and fury.

In many of her paintings, Forrester uses a threadbare and off-kilter pointillism to suggest forms in space. In the body of work on view here, she has built on this practice by flattening her marks and sharpening her canny approach to composition. Her *not* contains a portion of a 1919 work by Francis Picabia, *The Double World*, a dry joke of a painting featuring an elliptical figure which, Picabia quipped, somehow represented the formal logic of the *Mona Lisa*. In Forrester's interpretation, the figure is rotated and flipped, then doubled, so that the form occludes itself. In doing so, Forrester takes a line drawing of a masterpiece and twists it into a Möbius strip, leaving us lost inside the gag.

Forrester shares Picabia's interest in the way that art and perception are sublated into systems of information, a preoccupation which appears again in *Long Arc*. The composition is again a citation of a representation, this time of David Diao's interpretation of Bauhaus from his 2023 work *Rietveld's Berlin Chair Parts Making Bauhaus Profile Logo with Parts Left Over 2*. Constellations of marks, seen from a distance, form the contours of a still from Oliver Stone's 1987 film *Wall Street*: Charlie Sheen against a mirrored wall, which overlays Diao's composition like a grid. The work is obliquely labeled by a series of numbers; Forrester copied these from a spectroscopy of a Mondrian, his abstraction reduced to layers of pigments and transfigured into data. Here, alienated from their source, the numbers no longer describe anything real. They add up to nothing, circling the work like a clock counting forwards in time.

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The black hole at the center of the show is *American Express*, a painting of captions on a laptop screen. The words are Gordon Gekko's, as pronounced by Michael Douglas. But there is no speech here, only the transcription of a machine. Set against painterly visual snow, the sentence hovers incomplete. An accusation coheres before breaking down; the sentence both lacks meaning and contains too much. We can presume that the sentence will end, and the words will become what they always were: a pat phrase, a line from a movie. Forrester's painting captures something strange and startling in the moment just before it escapes.

—Will Weatherly

Carolyn Forrester (b. 1993 West Point, NY) lives and works in New York. She graduated from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2020 and Yale University in 2015. Forrester has had solo shows at King's Leap, New York; Inge, Plainview; and Carlye Packer, Los Angeles. Her work has been included in group shows at Antenna Space, Shanghai; M+B, Los Angeles; and Galerie Nicolas Robert, Montreal, amongst others. She has been an artist in residence at the Alex Brown Foundation, Byrdcliffe Artist Residency, and the Lower East Side Printshop.