



KING'S LEAP

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Carolyn Forrester

New Derivatives

January 13 to February 19, 2022

In *New Derivatives*, Carolyn Forrester submits five faux-pointillist paintings that superimpose various moments from the history of painting and images. Her paintings carry a dense network of signs, symbols, and references ranging from modernism to the entertainment industry. Between the shrapnel of glass or code depicted in the millennium-shifting film *The Matrix* to the irony embedded in the instrumentalized early impressionist landscapes of Picabia, Forrester infers a creeping and hidden collusion.

A frequent motif from *The X Files* introduction anchors the conspiratorial web of connections in her work. The popular tv show, starring Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny as FBI agents investigating neglected paranormal cases, is synonymous with the American spectacle of paranoia culture of the 1990s. In the painting *Billionaire Yachting Death*, Anderson and Duchovny's characters Scully and Mulder are embedded as pointillist dots, appearing transfixed by something beyond the borders of the canvas. Forrester overlaps sites of speculation, quotation, and misapprehension: text in the painting's foreground exclaiming "Did He Jump?" is taken from a headline in *The Sun* referencing the titular billionaire, Robert Maxwell, whose mysterious death led many to speculate suicide or murder, or even, something worse. Forrester plays with the paranoid and paranormal schemes all professional artists succumb to, their speculation as to the social, aesthetic, and financial interconnectivity of artistic careers, and then offers the supposition that an artistic practice is ultimately a conspiratorial enterprise. As it is for Mulder or Scully, "The Truth is Out There".

References to 19th and 20th-century painting— and equally, the philosophies of modernism at work in that era—abound in her work, most specifically an investigation into the post-impressionist movements: their various formulas, theories of vision, and hierarchies of color and value. Forrester's paintings reflect their distance from these movements in a utilization of techniques evacuated of grounding theories and their deliberately unsystematic application. Digital color has replaced debates around local or subjective color; there is rarely an explicit landscape or portrait, but here an assemblage of images, as vaguely

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pointillist accumulations of mark suggest that the conspiratorial mode of thought belongs to the lineage within painting of the reinvention and relocation of vision.

Forrester's direct engagement with the audience begins with the choice of spectacular subject matter and continues down to the painting's very composition, distorting and blurring the imagery so that pictures only register or cohere at certain distances. The smallest painting in the show, *Paper Handed Bitch*, is also the most difficult to read visually and, thus, perhaps the most pointed. However, as the viewer moves in and out of different vantage points, the vectors of stock prices and trend lines appear. For Forrester, painting is not just a receptacle for an audience's desires but a vehicle to transmit various forms of cultural and, unfortunately, financial capital. Speculation, not dissimilar to Forrester's feverish curiosity, embodies the contemporary nature of painting and its dissemination in galleries. "*Paper Handed Bitch*", an insult thrown at traders who sell early, glares at the rise and fall of painting and painters in the market; its trends and styles. Here it is that we must sell sell sell, that we must buy buy buy, and along with it is the recognition of an artist who is caught in the web of the always mysterious market and its players.

Carolyn Forrester (b. 1993, West Point, NY) is an artist living in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include Carlye Packer (Los Angeles, CA). Selected group exhibitions include Current Space (Baltimore, MD), Art Cake (Brooklyn, NY), and School 33 (Baltimore, MD). Forrester received a B.A. from Yale University in 2015 and an MFA from the Leroy E Hoffberger School of Painting, MICA, in 2020.