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In 2014, Karen Archey and Robin Peckham curated an exhibition titled "Art Post-internet" for the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing. Alongside this exhibition, was distributed a pdf where various authors and artists responded to this work through looking at its various themes. In this they made the following statement:

"Just as twentieth-century modernism was in large part defined by relationship between craft and emergent technologies of manufacturing, mass media, and lens-based imagery, the most pressing condition underlying contemporary culture today - from artistic practice and social theory to our quotidian language - may well be the omnipresence of the internet. "

When I first came across this idea a few years ago, I didn't really grasp its significance in relationship to the work I was trying to make. Returning to it now, I think this idea of the "omnipresence of the internet" put words to a feeling I'd been having about my artistic practice for some time. I've been trying to reconcile my ideas on this topic in my practice throughout my time in graduate school, sometimes without being fully aware of it.

For me, trying to reconcile the relationship between a digital image and the physical art-object is of specific importance and drives a lot of the questions I have about contemporary art practice. How do you negotiate the importance of the art-object when the thing that ultimately gets seen is the digital image? Why not cut to the chase and just make digital images? What then goes in the space of the gallery? Why does that matter?

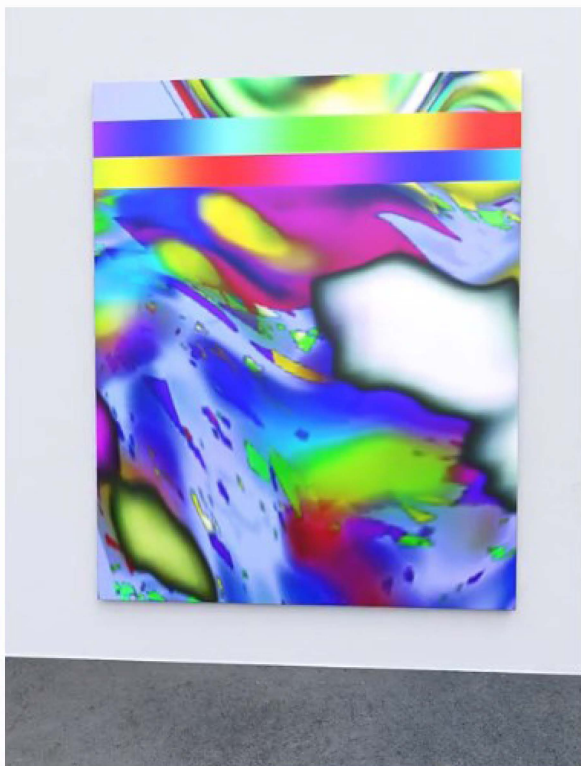
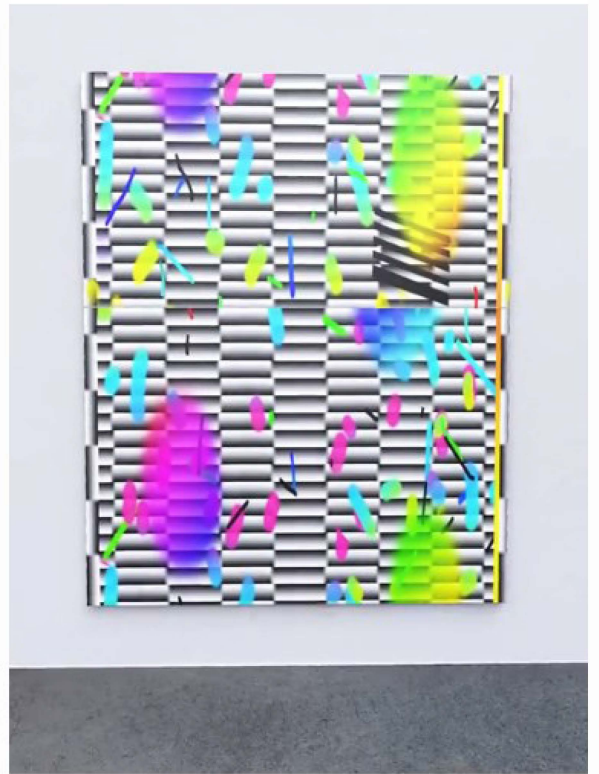
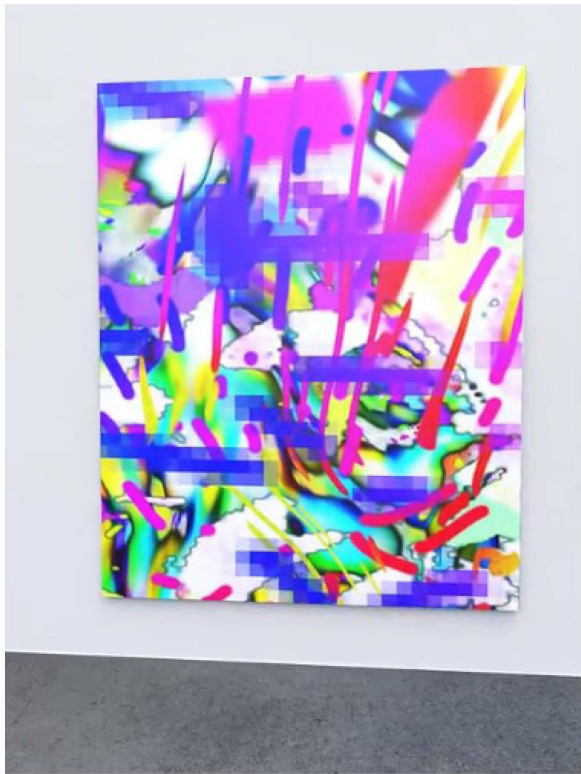
I don't really have any answers to these questions, but they represent a kind of crisis that I'm trying to negotiate in my artistic practice.

I've been thinking for a while now about how to situate my artistic practice between the physical spaces of the studio & gallery and the digital spaces of programs & websites. For me, my work seems to hinge both formally and conceptually on the differences between these spaces. I've never really set out with the intention of making this type of work, but somehow find myself working through it again and again.

This thinking led me through most of my work in graduate school and ultimately into my final thesis work. I was making mostly paintings, but couldn't shake the idea that my work would just end up as an image on the internet for most people. Why does this painting matter? What could I do in a gallery that would make it better than seeing an image online? I tried making all kinds of stuff - site-specific paintings, and paintings that were hard to photograph, paintings with heavy textural elements, etc. Most of these experiments, failed to really grapple with the issues I've been thinking about and dealing with in my head.

I found that making paintings without directly engaging with digital tools was not a good strategy for dealing with the issues i was interested in. What ended up being more interesting was making digital work directly, building in the relationship to digital spaces first with the idea of negotiating the space of the gallery later.

This lead to me experimenting with making digital videos/images for Instagram, tumblr, Facebook and my own website separately, with different formal concerns, and allowing the conventions of these websites to inform many of my decisions. These were often somewhat ephemeral works, meant to be seen in a feed of images and were often later removed. After all of this experimentation, I wanted to somehow negotiate these works with the paintings I had been previously making in the studio. I wondered how I could combine these two different areas of my practice into a series of works. How could I reference these digital spaces in a series of works? How can I combine my background in painting with my digital experimentation? These were some of the questions that I was looking for answers to as I moved forward.



In an interview with Cory Arcangel he talks about the space of the gallery and how it's negotiated with internet art:

Cory: [...] you can't just put a computer with a browser that's pointing to a website. You have to somehow acknowledge that it is in a gallery, for better or worse. Video, I think, started to do that [...] Paper Rad for example presented a huge sculpture, based on animated gifs. It wasn't necessarily Internet art anymore, but it was art that could only exist because the internet exists. That is definitely some kind of solution [...] That is what is going to happen I think. It's not going to be pure strict Internet art, it's going to be art that exists because of the Internet or is influenced by the Internet or there was research on the Internet.

Karen: That's almost everything in art. Almost all contemporary art is influenced by the fact that we live in a networked society.
Cory: That's fine you know. It is going to be seamlessly integrated into everything else. Which is what it should be. But pure internet art, I think, should stay on the Internet.

Karen: So, if I understand you correctly, you are saying that it is the responsibility of the artist to transform their internet art piece in that way that it fits into the gallery space. It is not the gallery that has to change its economic model of exhibiting because of their mission statement or whatever.

Corey: Yes

The strategy summed up here is roughly "the art needs to change to fit the gallery, instead of the gallery needs to change to fit the art". Still, I'm not sure if it so simple. Working within the confines of the

white cube is not always limiting - it can often be a way of to work with in a history of artists that challenged artistic conventions. On the other hand, sometimes the white cube can reinforce conventional modes of art-making and impede creative solutions.

For me, I think the gallery exists in a kind of strange place in the current cultural moment. Sometimes it feels more like a place where you socialize and document your work than exhibiting. Still, I think it's an important space for our culture and allows for certain artistic experiences that can't happen online.

As I've been making more digital work, I've wanted to think a bit more about what happens in the space of the gallery. What makes sense for me to do in this space? How do I reconcile the digital things I'm making into a show?

Thinking through the idea of "adapting digital work for the gallery" was one way for me to think about these practices and develop something for a gallery space.

In a interview with Régine Debatty, on the blog We Make Money Not Art, Marisa Olson hints at the increasing blurriness of the boundaries between "New Media" and "Traditional Media":

Régine Debatty: You are also a curator, both independently and as part of your activities at Rhizome. Your curating often deals with new media art pieces. What are the challenges of curating and exhibiting works of new media art today?

Marisa Olson: I think that there is presently a very exciting turn happening in new media, with respect to both the art world and the context of "traditional media." It used to be very important to carve out a separate space in which to show, discuss, and teach new media. Nowadays these spaces are sometimes seen

as ghettos, but at the time, they were safe havens championing under-recognized forms. Things are more commingled now. Not everyone will agree with me about this, but I think it's great that some people no longer even know new media when they see it. I know curators who turn their nose up at that phrase, but they love Cory Arcangel or Paul Pfeiffer. There doesn't seem to be a need to distinguish, any more, whether technology was used in making the work—after all, everything is a technology, and everyone uses technology to do everything. What is even more interesting is the way in which people are starting to make what I've called "Post-Internet" art in my own work (such as my Monitor Tracings), or what Guthrie Lonergan recently called "Internet Aware Art." I think it's important to address the impacts of the internet on culture at large, and this can be done well on networks but can and should also exist offline. Of course, it's an exciting challenge to explain to someone how this is still internet art... If that really matters...

This statement gets at the increasing blurriness of the boundaries between "new media art" and "traditional art". They aren't really such separate things anymore. This is something that I had been feeling for awhile in my own work as I worked back and forth between digital methodologies and physical ones. The boundaries have always felt pretty fluid for me, but I continued to feel that the communities of "traditional art" and "new media art" still didn't circulate or converse with each other, even when they were dealing with similar issues. This 'blurriness' was one of the things I was interested in capturing in my thesis work.

Olsen here points out that making work about the impacts of digital spaces should also be done both online and offline. This is one of the ideas that made me more interested in making a series of paintings, even though it was pretty different from the work I was making online. What does a physical work offline need to do to address the impact of digital culture? How can it address these issues differently than works I'm making online? These questions are some of the things that lead me into trying to make a series of paintings with an awareness of digital spaces.

This collection of ideas represents the set of concerns that I had while trying to make a series paintings this year. I wanted to make something that referenced the digital spaces I was working in while adapting to the physical space of the gallery. At the same time, I was interested in them doing things only physical paintings can do, by having elements that you might only appreciate in the space of the gallery.

So, I ended up making this series of paintings with the idea that I wanted to combine my digital works with the physical paintings I was making. I started by printing a series of digital paintings - with the idea of grounding the work within a digital space, and translating them into physical paintings by printing them out. Working digitally allowed me to iterate quickly and work through many paintings before actualizing them, so I wanted to lean into that idea.

After working through many digital ideas I began the process of printing them out. This process went through some material iterations - different printing processes and substrates before landing on the more conventional inkjet on paper. I experimented with more complicated processes, but using fairly quick and easy processes made it more easy to iterate quickly in the same way that I was doing digitally. I often printed out the same image several times over and worked with it in different ways.

After printing out the images, my initial feeling was one of slight disappointment. I found that the digital paintings lacked something after being printed, something they didn't need on the screen but were somehow lacking on paper. They felt a bit too flat, the colors didn't pop the same way, but mostly they felt like 'prints of digital paintings', rather than works themselves.

So, I ended up painting and drawing, on top of the prints as a way to try to add to them. The digital paintings I was making became a kind of substrate for the physical marks and materials, and this is what changed them. For me, this added the something that was missing, and I was able to look at them not as 'prints of digital paintings' but as 'paintings that referenced the digital'. Sometimes this shift would happen after just a few marks, while other needed several layers to get there.

Some of the paintings ended up going too far, sometimes getting completely covered in painted elements and losing that 'reference to



the digital' that I wanted from the beginning. When this happened, and I wanted to reintroduce the digital elements, it was obvious that the painting weren't going to be able to handle another run through the printer.

I began to search for new ways to reintroduce digital elements. I tried a few things, but what ended up working for me was making stencils out of photoshop brushes and other digital marks and using those to simulate digital marks. I used these stencils in additive and subtractive ways, leading to a kind of balancing act of printing, painting and reintroducing digital references. This is the point where I felt like the paintings started to reference the digital space in new ways that I felt could only happen in a painting.

I ended up with twelve paintings I chose to show in group. Each of the paintings dealt with the elements I was using in a unique way from the others and I felt that the range of compositions gave the group a more dynamic and diverse presence overall. They were all the same size, and drew on similar references, but explored them differently, which reflected the diverse subject matter I was interested in. I felt like having that many unique paintings grouped closely, left you feeling like there was always more to see when you looked at them repeatedly.

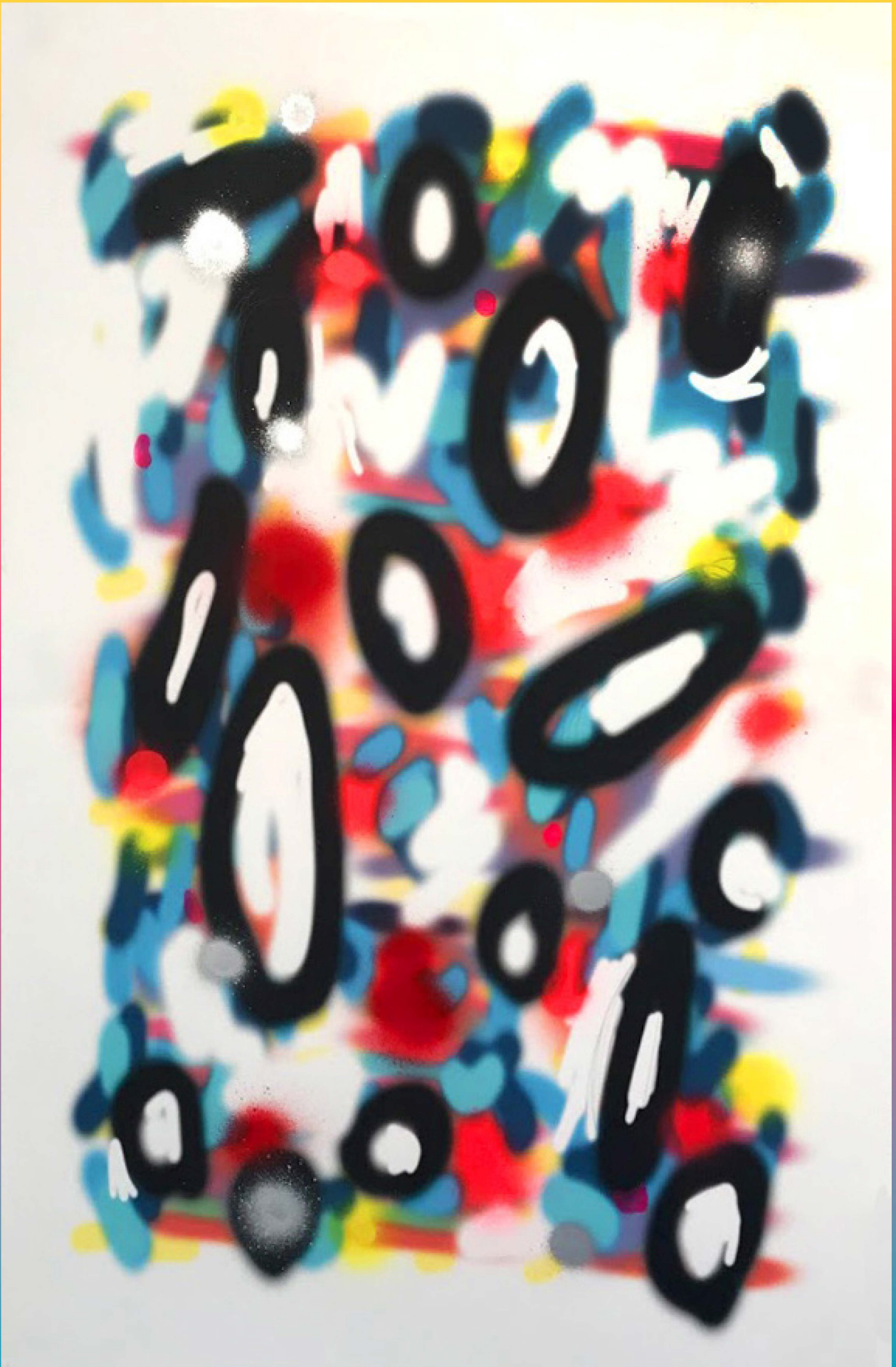
I'm not sure if the paintings ultimately communicated the things I was thinking about, though, I don't necessarily believe they need to. They were made from the tension between ideas I was dealing with at the time - each clashing with each other and leading toward the final result. This was a fruitful crisis and synthesis of ideas into one series, that left me with many thoughts for future projects.



In an interview with Laura Owens she stated the following in trying to define her decisions in a series of paintings she made:

“There’s a certain risk-taking, that I think people avoid while while making art exhibitions because the really want to be sure they’re doing ‘good art’. Martin Kippenberger, Picabia, everyone - this history tells us that is not the way to make art. You are not trying to make good art.”

I think about this idea of not trying to make “good art” often now. I think if there’s something I learned from making these works is that the most interesting things that happened were when I took risks and tried experimented with ideas that I wasn’t sure about. When I began on this series of works, I didn’t really set out to make a good painting. I was more interested in trying to combine some of my various concerns and the different areas of my practice into one body of work. This process of experimentation and problem-solving was something that I worried about, and for a long time, I wasn’t sure if I could make something interesting out of the ideas I was trying to work with. I think dealing with this uncertainty was something that lead to unexpected solutions that created the parts of the work that were the most successful.



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