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The Haze of Passing Years: Luca Dellaverson at Tilton Gallery

by William J. Simmons

Luca Dellaverson: Fight This Generation at Tilton Gallery

May 2 to June 26, 2015

8 East 76 Street, between Madison and Fifth avenues

New York City, 212-737-2221



Installation shot, Luca Dellaverson: Fight This Generation at Tilton Gallery, June 2015

Longing and obsolescence are the lingering experiences of Luca Dellaverson's second solo show at Tilton Gallery, *Fight This Generation*. It is a display filled with sullied objects of desire that leave us with the feeling of time palpably slipping through our fingers. The first such encounter, upon entering the gallery, is an iPod Classic doused in epoxy that sits in an industrial bucket – the now-defunct device immobilized like a prehistoric insect in amber. This urge to remember a not-too-distant past continues with Dellaverson's

pirated digital films from the 1990s, such as *Jurassic Park* and *Independence Day*, distorted to a point of unrecognizability. Covered with epoxy resin and Plexiglas, the LED monitors, each playing a different film, create a cacophony of yesteryear in which, from time to time, one can make out a phrase from a favorite movie. Reminiscent of Jack Pierson's grainy billboards or Marilyn Minter's steamy close-ups, Dellaverson's movies appeal to the instability of memory – the haze of passing years whose patina covers our youthful memories. In the final room, lastly, is a set of works paying homage to David Hammons. There is a sense of tragic distance, that we are indeed fighting a generation so dear to many of us as we move along in the 21st Century.



Luca Dellaverson, *Untitled*, 2015. Epoxy resin and painted glass with wood support, 66 x 51 inches. Courtesy of Tilton Gallery

The *tour de force* of the exhibition is a set of glass and resin paintings-cum-sculptures. Using epoxy resin poured over glass, Dellaverson creates aleatory, web-like cracks that recall Tomás Saraceno's spider-infested vitrines exhibited earlier this year at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery. With no control over the outcome of the image, these works are the reflection of a chemical process rather than an authorial mark. Flamboyantly colored and spectacularly lit, they remind this writer of a drag show in a glamorously run-down club long after the dancing has stopped. As a result of the interaction of epoxy and resin, each monochrome, moreover, bursts and ripples at the edges, like a piece of ice slowly melting away. These sculptures are at once intensely material and ethereal; it seems that they could fall apart into nothingness at any moment even as they stand firm like monuments.

In this way, Dellaverson breaks apart the monochrome like a collapsed disco ball; or put

another way, he shatters the monochrome and lays it bare for examination, like a battered body upon an operating table. Whereas Kazimir Malevich placed his *Black Square* in the corner of the gallery like an icon, Dellaverson completely destroys any spiritual connotations by likening his works not to, say, stained glass in a cathedral, but rather to the detritus of a recently bygone decade. The conventions and aspirations of monochrome are thus destroyed, to become instead a fractured collage.

The vision of modern life Dellaverson presents is thus random and jumbled and overwhelmingly insecure, yet there is a beauty in this state of flux that is akin to the unpredictable nature of the human body. As a result, these pieces resemble flesh with all its wondrous

uncertainty and its cascading marks of age. Dellaverson's work is as corporeal as it is conceptual. As a result of the bodily and art historical conventions Dellaverson evokes, a paradoxically joyful melancholia pervades this exhibition. Despite their inviting appearance, the glass and resin works are mirrors that reflect nothing. Our own vanity frustrated, we are implicated in this process, as we cannot find ourselves in these mirrors.

Like the splintered surface of these objects, our ego too falls apart; the history of the monochrome thus becomes an analogy of our constant battle against time – physically, mentally and spiritually. Wholeness is impossible, no matter how desperately we hope for it. Time and materiality have placed Dellaverson's work into an alien realm with which we must nevertheless contend if we are to truly feel and embody the steady march of history. Towards what? Dellaverson gives us no answer.



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