

SGORBATI PROJECTS

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CHERYL DONEGAN

8 January - 21 February 2015

Opening Reception 8 January 6-8pm

Sgorbati Projects is pleased to present an exhibition of artworks by Cheryl Donegan. This will be the gallery's first single artist exhibition, and will be Donegan's first one person exhibition in New York since 2007. Featured are four videos, including *ALIVE! ARTIST! MODEL! PLEASURE!* (1998) which has never been publicly exhibited, and two bodies of current abstract paintings. Starting in the early 1990s, Donegan combined video, painting, and performance to confront issues of sex, gender, and the creative process. The artist's body was prominently featured as both agent and image in iconic videos of that period. In her current work, these themes continue, yet a contemporary moment is defined: identity, previously described as 'body', is now interpreted as clothing, fashion, and technology. 'Self' is defined by 'surface'.

Donegan's early video work—categorized by a direct, DIY process and an ever-present, often subtly fictionalized, self-portrait—now seems to have been an early predictor of YouTube videos. Most of the footage in her video production since 2000 is sourced directly from social media. *Blood Sugar* (2012) introduces the idea of metabolism as a metaphor for a continuous cycle and recycle of images. As fashion models emerge and recede into darkness, images and patterns appear, degrade and reemerge to a locked PJ Harvey groove. *I Still Want to Drown* (2010), set to Dionne Warwick's 1965 song *Are You There (With Another Girl)*, shows the artist briefly at the beginning, and again at the end. In between, projected and re-filmed clips from Chantal Akerman's 1975 film, *Jeanne Dielman* are juxtaposed to hyperreal, pristine, computerized architectural renderings of home interiors and images of *objets d'art* both on display and in storage. *Music Video* (2008), questions our notions of happiness and personal freedom through the joyous mashup of 1970s dancers with The Smiths 1987 song, *Sheila Take a Bow*, and the 2008 poem, *re:evolution* by Kim Rosenfield. *ALIVE! ARTIST! MODEL! PLEASURE!* (1998) employs a troupe of high school drama performers engaged in slap-stick reenactments of Donegan's earlier videos referencing gesture painting. The actors perform while singing the title song from the 1955 Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis film, *Artists and Models*.

For Donegan's *Resist* paintings, process again becomes performance. Adapting a simplified batik project seen online, the artist repeatedly dyes and washes gingham or polka dot fabrics. The painterly process is based in simple acts of domestic labor. The result is the seamless integration of mark and surface—a visual effect much like the digital marks on a tablet or computer screen. The seemingly intuitive lines, are in fact, preplanned; an air of the provisional betrays a suggestion of spatial illusion. The markings contain references including architectural examples of Rem Koolhaas's idea of 'junkspace', fashion by Comme des Garçons, floor plans, logos, and broken surfaces. However specific, they are notational and suggestive in form. In the end, they hint at, then act to deny the notion of the artist's masterstroke. The *Gingham on Jute* paintings are made by applying sprayed layers of acrylic paint to a heavily textured surface. Gingham's checkered pattern is associated with banal yard goods, with fashion, and for the artist, references Photoshop's transparency screen. The rough weave of burlap draws attention to surface, and the disruption of scale, color, and geometry modifies the familiar, and breaks the traditional notion of a painter's grid. Donegan's work describes a present state dictated by data and technology, but renders that condition visible through low-tech means: an inherent disparity is exaggerated and brought clearer into focus, while the tension between the poles remains unresolved.

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Cheryl Donegan (b. 1962 New Haven, Connecticut) lives and works in New York City. She received her B.F.A. in Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design and an M.F.A. at Hunter College in New York. She was an artist-in-residence at ART/OMI, and Banff Center for Fine Arts, Alberta, Canada. Her work has been exhibited widely in museums, galleries, and festivals including *NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star* at The New Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA PS1, White Columns, The 1995 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the New York Film and Video Festival. National and international exhibitions where Donegan's work has appeared include: The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The 1993 Venice Biennale, The 1995 Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, France, White Flag Library, St Louis, Mo., The Tang Museum at Skidmore College, The deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Boston University's Stone Gallery, and the Canzani Center Gallery at The Columbus College of Art and Design, Columbus, OH.

Sgorbati Projects was founded in 2013 by Seth Sgorbati. Working with artists, curators and others, Sgorbati Projects presents works of varied practice, and is actively involved in the sale of contemporary artworks on both the primary and secondary markets. Sgorbati Projects shares its exhibition space with Salomon Contemporary, alternating exhibitions.

Sgorbati Projects is located at 525-531 West 26th Street on the fourth floor.

For further information, please contact the gallery, or visit the gallery website, www.sgorbatiprojects.com.