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Judith Eisler

Dreams, Jokes, Mistakes

September 5 - October 26, 2024

For her third solo exhibition at Casey Kaplan, Judith Eisler presents *Dreams, Jokes, Mistakes*, including new and earlier paintings based on her photographs of paused film scenes. Each composition depicts a frozen moment in cinematic time, where Eisler's predominantly female subjects are caught mid-narrative, cropped, and re-contextualized by the fundamental elements of painting – form, color and light. These pictures of pictures include the moiré patterns of digital distortion and lens flares visible in the instant Eisler hits pause, resisting the clarity of conventional portraiture.

The exhibition's title, *Dreams, Jokes, Mistakes*, refers to the three means by which Sigmund Freud perceived manifestations of the unconscious. The structure of a joke, a dream, and a mistake all rely on substitutions that are performed and embodied in either language or action. It is within the rupture of meaning between two opposing constructs that an unconscious thought or desire can become accessible or apparent.

"The content of a joke is separate from the joke, and is the content of the thought, which is expressed as a joke by a particular contrivance." - Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, 1905.

The exhibition collapses the 14 years between the earliest and most recent paintings, acknowledging the artist's consistent inquiry into the psychology of image-making. Here, impossible images emerge from a dreamlike, temporal space: two versions of a doubly-exposed Toni Basil share the same canvas; a cigarette case gleams in eternal darkness; permanent tears cling to the eyelashes of Marisa Mell.

The publication of *Judith Eisler: Center of the Frame*, a monograph published by Lenz Press, Milan, Italy, surveys the artist's paintings from 1997 to 2024, and includes an interview with Wade Guyton, an introduction by Christopher Bollen and an essay by Kirsty Bell, and will be released to coincide with the exhibition.

A reception for *Judith Eisler: Center of the Frame* will be held at 5:00 pm on Thursday, September 19, featuring a conversation with Judith Eisler and Christopher Bollen in the exhibition.