

# Elizabeth Dee

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## Striped Bare, Even and Again

**Meredyth Sparks** Opening reception Thursday, September 15 from 6:00-8:00pm

*"The removed material, in this initial stage, is conceived as cut from some (prior) whole that remains left behind.*

*Extraction begins then, by taking away from an image or object, while also in its very realization, intimating what remains." 1*

Elizabeth Dee is pleased to present Meredyth Sparks' third solo exhibition at the gallery, *Striped Bare, Even and Again*, the second iteration of a two-part exhibition that began at VeneKlasen/Werner, Berlin. Sparks' work continues to merge the territories of decoration, historic and artistic modernism(s) and appropriation through a technique the artist terms, *extraction*. In Sparks' past and present work, *extraction* considers the contemporary relevance of the politics and aesthetics of musical subcultures, the historical avant-garde, and the ever-evolving legacies of labor and gender.

Sparks' new paintings combine patterned fabrics with digital prints on canvas that the artist stitches together by hand. The juxtaposition of these two competing visual fields—the photograph, specific to a particular time and place, and patterned fabric, indicative of infinite space—meet and pull apart in visually unexpected ways. The photographic imagery in this series focuses on domestic objects, including covered radiators, window blinds, and bedroom dressers, which Sparks alters digitally. Simultaneously acknowledging the decorative act while restricting the decorative impulse in the making of the work itself, these paintings create a temporal and spatial instability that, in effect, generate a productive confusion as to what is photographed and what is painted, what is real and what is illusion.

Also on view are several sculptural works that directly and indirectly comment on figures and events from the early 20th century. In one work, spoons are joined end-to-end, creating radiating lines that extend from a polished aluminum triangle suspended from the ceiling. The resulting piece, as well as other sculptural installations Sparks has exhibited this year, make reference to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, an incident that, in the artist's work, signifies the emergence of the modern woman in the public realm. *Figure One: The Baroness' Bucket*, a sculpture made of metal and ice, is comprised of a coal bucket perched on top of a metal base. The coal bucket (and its phantom form in ice), also adorned with silver spoons, references the proto-Dadaist "lived performances" of the Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The ephemeral quality of ice melting in *Figure One* recalls the subtle details of light, film, screens and shadows that have played such a major role in Sparks' previous works. But this ephemerality also reminds us of how minor histories are written and the power inscribed in even the most muted details and forms.

**Meredyth Sparks** has exhibited widely in international gallery and museum contexts, including solo gallery exhibitions at Projects in Art+Theory, Cologne, Catherine Bastide, Brussels and others. She has participated in group exhibitions at ICA, Boston; CAPC Museum of Contemporary Art, Bordeaux; and Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela. In 2009, Monografik Editions published the artist's first monograph, with texts by Nicolas Bourriaud and Robert Hobbs. Sparks lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

1 *"Extraction: An Apology for Cutting. 1. Etymologies, only after the fact,"* by Brian Gempp with Meredyth Sparks, *Striped Bare*, pp. 22-19