

FOXY PRODUCTION

MICHAEL BELL-SMITH

RABBIT SEASON, DUCK SEASON

10 October 2014 to 26 November 2014

RABBIT SEASON, DUCK SEASON, Michael Bell-Smith's latest solo exhibition at Foxy Production, features new paintings and video that integrate digital and hand-made elements. Bell-Smith uses commonplace iconography to construct a dialectic on how media convey meaning. Image and sound design tropes, almost invisible in their ubiquity, are re-imagined and repurposed to produce a speculative meditation on repetition and duality.

Bell-Smith's paintings comprise vinyl forms adhered to white aluminum panel. They start as a digital image outputted to a vinyl cutter one color at a time and are built up by the artist, layer by layer (not unlike the process of screen-printing), into the final composition. Sharing the same materials and production techniques as the everyday store signs they bring to mind, they form three distinct series. One has dynamic, abstract patterning that underlines the common ground between corporate design and Modernist masters like Matisse; another combines expressionistic flourishes with familiar graphic memes. The third is text-based: each work ascribes the same quotation to a different famous person. They resemble ad-proofs: areas where text or images should be are blocked out with visual filler.

Bell-Smith's new video, Rabbit Season, Duck Season, is on one level a moving image essay about dichotomies, and on another a punchy montage of disparate components: including text, stock footage, electronic sounds, and both cel and 3D animation. Using the motifs of a bouncing ball and signs ripped from a tree-trunk, the artist sets up a series of binaries, either-ors involving a range of common alternatives – real or virtual, original or copy, noise or harmony – and then proposes a philosophical thesis, which may or may not be taken at face value, about the cyclical nature of things.

Michael Bell-Smith (East Corinth, ME, 1978) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He holds a BA in Semiotics from Brown University, Providence, RI; and an MFA from Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY.

Selected exhibitions include Sound Spill, Zabłudowicz Art Projects, New York, NY; Spectacle: The Music Video, Museum of the Moving Image, Queens, NY; (both 2013); Is This Thing On? Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH; ICA MECA, Portland, ME (solo) (both 2012); Hiroshima MOCA, Japan (solo project); The Cinema Effect: Illusion, Reality, and the Moving Image: Part I – Dreams, Caixaforum, Madrid and Barcelona, Spain (both 2011); Abandon Normal Devices, FACT, Liverpool, UK (2009); The Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, UK; Montage: Unmonumental Online, The New Museum, New York, NY; Blown Away, Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL (all 2008); The Singles Collection, SFMoMA, San Francisco, CA; Playback, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France; Reality Bytes, Dallas Center for Contemporary Art, Dallas, TX (all 2007); and Butch Queen Realness with a Twist in Pastel Colors Video Show, Tate Liverpool, UK (2005).