

**GBE
291 GRAND STREET
3RD FLOOR**

**OLIVER PAYNE
ELEGANT CODE
MARCH 18 – APRIL 17, 2016**

The arcade has traditionally represented an idea of a “third space” for teens. Too young to go to bars, adolescents have so few places to hang. I like places like that – skate spots, graffiti halls of fame, arcades. Slightly sketchy places for teens to kick it. The arcade industry is on the way out and they really won't be around for much longer. I think places like these are important to document (...) Why are arcades on the decline? Why have they been shutting at an alarming rate? The lazy answer is that home consoles are so good that they have brought arcade quality to the home. But arcades are still in full force in Japan. So why can the west no longer profit from dedicated gaming rooms?

Oliver Payne, 2012

This is an exhibition of new works by British artist Oliver Payne, marking his first solo show at the gallery. After studying at the Kingston University Faculty of Art and Design in London, Payne began collaborating with Nick Relph during the late 1990s, creating a body of seminal video and installation work.

Since working as a solo artist (2007/9), Payne's practice has focused on ideas of subjectivity and context. The artist draws from disparate sources such as Japanese videogames and subcultures to camping gear brand fetishes, that reflect on our perception of an “outside” reality. Starting from a suspicion against the world that we recognize or accept with common knowledge, Payne explores the contemporary relations between virtually connected players, between inside experiences and outside expressions, spaces of drift, areas of in between and in flux.

Showcasing different bodies of work focusing around the idea of the arcade, its heritage and its slow decay to obsolescence, the exhibition's rhythm is conferred through interaction. Upon entering, one encounters two large steel sculptures inspired by Gundam, the famed science fiction media franchise featuring giant robot “mobile suits.” After its debut in 1979, Gundam became a revolutionary anime TV series, defining the real robot genre of anime by featuring giant robots in a militaristic war setting. The creators combined the English word “gun” with the last syllable of the word “freedom” to form the portmanteau name Gundam. The symbolic motives of these works follow the iconography of video games and robot-animations, while starting to mimic their immediate environment. Black, shiny plinths scattered through the space, evoke the sleekness of a high-end cosmetic salon, raising colorful plastic weed containers up into the realm of the sacred. Hanging on the walls are collages inspired by the fabled Candy Crush Saga game, manipulated into monitor screens, mimicking our extensive daily scrolling activities. A school desk fully equipped with a video game emulator, along with a screen onto which the game is projected, is transformed into an Arcade Desk titled *Imagination Station (Procedural Rhetoric)*.

While remixing documentation, performance, and quotation, Payne delivers an immersive celebration of the complexity of the Arcade's role and its vivid imaginary on contemporary society.

Oliver Payne (b. 1977, London) lives and works in Los Angeles. As a duo with Nick Relph, his work has been shown internationally in museums and institutions, including: Serpentine Gallery, London; Kunsthalle Zurich, The National Museum of Contemporary art, Oslo. Recent exhibitions include Nanzuka, Tokyo and Hong Kong; Studiolo, Zurich; Vavassori, Milan (curated by Fredi Fischli and Niels Olsen).

(After spending countless hours in SoCal video arcades gathering sounds, Payne produced a record, inviting Gang Gang Dance's Brian Degraw to remix its B side. Payne is also the publisher of Safe Crackers fanzine, of which issue 7 parallel to the record's release, was dedicated to the truly fascinating world of arcade game tokens. The artist is also the restless instigator of Chill Out performances, in which he requires all mobile phone and internet systems to be turned off, in order to allow the public to immerse in a listening party for “Chill Out,” the concept album by late-80s British house band KLF.)

