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The Marbled Plane

Inez Genereux and Cale Weir
April 10 – May 8, 2015

The Marbled Plane is a video-based, multimedia artwork by Inez Genereux and Cale Weir, who are collectively known as O.S.A. (Original Sports Angel). The installation employs parody and material investigation to explore contemporary and classical art aesthetics by poking fun at Internet art's fixation on classical sculpture and white marble. On a video monitor, the artists are seen filing at a Greco-Roman plaster bust, the debris of which, enhanced by CGI, falls from the video screen and appears to collect on the floor of the installation space. The dust extends to form "the marbled plane", a highly aestheticized world enveloped by marble-print vinyl, which represents the digital plane of "infinite aesthetic possibility", and the seemingly endless cache of Internet art that utilizes these visual components. For O.S.A., material decisions are central to the installation's success, and the distinction between printed vinyl and actual marble signifies the way in which luxury goods have been co-opted for use by artists, and by the middle and lower classes.

The concept behind *The Marbled Plane* can be interpreted from multiple points of reference, all of which can be tied to a movement in art history. O.S.A. references contemporary Internet art's obsession with marble, classical sculpture and stark minimalism. Like most internet trends, it cannot be given a precise point of origin. The ability to interpret *The Marbled Plane* from this vantage point is not accessed through art history texts, but instead by a familiarity with contemporary Internet art, most likely through use of websites and apps like Tumblr and Instagram. For those without exposure to contemporary digital culture, the plaster bust and marbled surfaces of *The Marbled Plane* may be interpreted as markers for the mid-18th century Neoclassical art movement, in which Greco-Roman sculpture and symbolism became wildly popular and was revered

as the pinnacle of artistic beauty. From the intended viewpoint, where the installation references Internet art referencing Neoclassicism, and the filing of the bust is a stance against what the O.S.A. views as an already tired and tried aesthetic.

The Marbled Plane is intended to be humorous, even for those viewers unfamiliar with current trends in Internet art, or with the subtle humor of O.S.A.'s artistic practice. This ease of accessibility and the installation's playful demeanor is recognizable by even those reading the installation as a modernist critique. Accessibility is a central tenet for O.S.A., who believe art needn't be pretentious or intentionally exclusive. A smirk or laugh should come naturally to viewers, and there shouldn't be a struggle to grasp the installation's broader themes, let alone find humour in its critical approach.

By using parody as a means of investigation, *The Marbled Plane* undertakes the same artistic aesthetic that it mocks, walking a line between satire and critique. However, the artists' measured theatricality of gesture and the overt absurdity of the entire installation means *The Marbled Plane* successfully differentiates itself as parody and escapes interpretation as homage. The act of filing down of the bust's nose, throat and nipples, is comical and absurd, and it is because of this satire that *The Marbled Plane* is successful in both critiquing and poking fun at its target.

It is indeed a strange occurrence that when the internet provides infinite aesthetic possibilities, the aesthetic parodied in *The Marble Plane* has commanded such a massive online following. O.S.A. asks us to consider why Internet art is fixated on this particular aesthetic. Is the use of marbled and Greco-Roman sculpture conceptual or critical, or do people simply like the way it looks? Is there something about the recent accessibility (or a digitized version, at least) of a luxury good that feeds into the millennial craze for marble-print sweatshirts, iPhone cases and timeline cover photos? Are we being duped, or are we, as a generation, just unceasingly ironic? *The Marbled Plane* asks these questions but doesn't answer them, and instead lets us draw our own conclusions about where our tastes in art come from and what the consequences of aesthetically-driven art movements are. When we have endless possibilities at our fingertips, why are we rehashing disproved and discarded aesthetics? Isn't this the future?

- Kate Hicke