Anna Eyler and Nicolas Lapointe

no-fluke/no-feed/no-swim/no-play/no-fun

April 6, 2018- May 5, 2018

 no-fluke/no-feed/no-swim/no-play/no-fun is a mixed-media installation by Anna Eyler and Nicolas Lapointe, artists whose interests range from the overlap between virtual and physical spaces, the communicative capabilities of low-wattage electronics and digitally-rendered geological forms, as well as the environmental legacy of a technologically-driven anthropocene. While these previous works are primarily sculptural (even the digital works are largely concerned with the location of a body or form in space), this installation is given to us behind glass, emphasizing the separation between this space and that of the viewer. The artists describe their role in this work as "amateur archaeologists from an imagined future,"[1] though the reality they present here is perhaps less removed from the one outside of its enclosure than we might initially think.

 Three laser-etched plexiglass forms are arranged along the window, their shapes derived from the Mannerist painter Jacopo Pontormo's 1528 altarpiece *Deposition from the Cross*. Lights are fixed to the backs of these ghostly forms, filling the space with pale-coloured lights that find their way to the foreground and play off the plexiglass surfaces. Two of the three shapes are in perpetual motion, at times almost imperceptibly. Passing pedestrians may fail to notice their tectonic shift only to discover, the next time they happen to glance at the window, that the forms have rearranged themselves. Key elements of Lapointe's previous work, creating synthetic rock formations and embedding low-power

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[1]Lapointe, Nicolas "no-fluke/no-feed/no-swim/no-play/no-fun/", nicolaslapointe.com, 2017, https://www.nicolaslapointe.com/no-fluke

electronics into them, is present in the rock-like markings etched onto the three forms. Eyler's interests in virtual spaces, mediated habitats, and technologically-enhanced landscapes is present in the spatial structure of this surreal enclosure—visually inviting, but ultimately removed from human intervention.

Distilling from Pontormo's work its flatness, colour palette, emotive resonance, and mystical aura, *no-fluke* transposes these visual elements from the painted altarpiece to a kinetic window display; this traditionally commercial context makes literal the increasingly tenuous distinction between viewer and consumer. Careful not to venture into the spectacular, this work seems less to announce its own presence than to suggest it, as though it aims to be seen through the corner of one's eye. Privileging (or perhaps targeting) the passer-by, *no-fluke* employs the familiarity of the window display at the same time that it attempts to subvert and disrupt it; the viewer is here confronted with a scene that resists any singular narrative or call-to-action. The significance of Pontormo's painting as an altarpiece is amplified in this new, traditionally retail space; however, it would be too reductive to conclude that the artists are suggesting the retail space has become, in our contemporary commercial culture, a sacred space. Neither is it likely that the intention is to announce that the mystical has been displaced by the technological; rather, it is a construction that simply gathers these elements and allows their associations to play out on loop. As such, *no-fluke/no-feed/no-swim/no-play/no-fun* presents a landscape that exists to be noticed—using the commercial window display as a device to disrupt the often passive visual experience of the present urban environment.

The repetition of daily life, at its most banal, sees the majority of us occupying the same spaces and moving through the same paths each day, in cycles determined by days of the week—this is contemporary reality, and one of its consequences is the effect it has on vision; namely, it conjures a film or filter that mediates and limits our visual engagement with our surroundings simply because we are familiar—to modify Frank Stella's famous and oft-quoted aphorism, what you see is what you've *seen*.[2] Paradoxically, this repetition in vision results in a lack, a negation of vision—in other words, it is difficult to really see

[2] Foster, Hal, et al. *Art Since 1900: 1945 to the Present* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2011), 447.

something you are familiar with, and the influence of memory on vision is a powerful mediator.

It is therefore all the more significant when we encounter a scene that does not simply reinforce or align with our expectations. The confusion, or perhaps bewilderment, felt upon seeing something new and not immediately absorbed is in fact the sensation of vision renewed. *no-fluke* rewards extended looking by allowing the passage of time to literally change what we see and how we see it. There is no singular perspective, no *trompe l'oeil*, and no climax to the scene before us. So why are we looking?

We might stop to look because we are attracted to the plays of light, or because we have noticed the slow shifting of these forms across the window. But as extended looking unfolds the layers of this landscape, we might also consider the relationships between religious iconography, commercial marketing, geological processes, and the mediation of technology in our daily lives. These lines are never, and can never, be fully resolved; they provide a visual experience no less tangled, constructed, and nebulous as everything else we encounter outside of our own windows. The point, if we are expected to arrive at one, might be to stop, to notice, to consider. *no-fluke* not only invites us to stay because of what it displays within its own confines, but also spills outward so that we may walk away still looking— with a consistent intensity, criticality, and curiosity, to never cease investigating why our world is arranged the way it is.

-Calin Stefan