



Snow Show

Ian Miller

January 23rd, 2023

Ian Miller (b. 1995) presents a series of paintings on the exterior of Freddy in Harris, NY, during a snowstorm. That this presentation has already happened and was photographed, and that the majority of us will only see the documentation and will not experience in person the cold, snowy presentation, is as much a part of this show as the paintings themselves.

Miller pushes further at the limits of what is reproducible within an image in this reality play, working from the assumption that any image created will, with a dominant inevitably, be seen primarily on a screen. In photographs of the show, the white sky, white painted board structure and white snow-covered ground aptly mimic the interior of a gallery space, erasing details in the same way the repetitive cartoon imagery in the paintings negate the details of realism for simplistic gestures that economically communicate information. Broad lines and curves hint at circuit board conduit and lightbulb filament, vital infrastructure routinely ignored until its failure brings our desire for it to the forefront. Duplicated windows act as portals to essential networks working outside of the artist and viewer yet inextricably entangling their perspectives.

Which experience is real, seeing an outdoor painting show in person or seeing a digital photo of it on a screen? If the only reality is a quantum state, which will be seen differently depending on the perspective of the viewer, then both encounters are equally real and yet where the viewer stands can't be discounted. The viewer there will see the movement of snow on a painting's surface and feel the cold. The viewer online will see it as an arrangement of information composed for the screen. Gaps in experience are replaced by a narrative in the screen-viewer's mind, pointing to an inherent lack generated by their position, a desire for more than what is being portrayed.

If we didn't see things on a screen that we can't obtain or experience first hand, would we ever feel desire anymore? Or is the desire the point because reality, with its complexity and physical discomforts, always disappoint? Here, Miller uses painting to oscillate in this space of uncertainty, understanding that the current crisis of representation has little to do with the details of figuration and is more concerned with the context of the practice as a whole.

—Alivia Zivich