

Zach Reini
For The Fun Of It All
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Press Release

Denver-based artist Zach Reini uses iconic American imagery and a minimal insertion of the artist's hand to bastardize and re-code the viewer's relation to cultural symbology. In relation to Hito Steyerl's essay *In Defense of a Poor Image*, which is primarily focused on the reproduction of a digital still, Reini implores Steyerl's alternate definition of a "poor image [as] as an illicit fifth-generation bastard of an original image... it often defies patriarchy, national culture, and indeed copyright." Following the belief of re-contextualizing these are Reini's paintings presented in "For The Fun Of It All," which manifest this bastardization through the lens of crisp and decisive destruction.

The precise cuts and viewing limitations Reini imposes on these cultural icons recodes their symbolism from one of American innocence to a sinister and lewd caricature of American cultural identity. Using a minimal approach to restrict the visual narrative of these icons reinterprets their importance in the American codified vernacular as new arbiters of a darker purpose, thusly introducing a form of Bakhtin's body grotesque to those who are loyal to these beloved figures; Or, rather, the small windows into the underlying painting uncover the once grotesque pretense to reveal the inherent representation, or poor image, below.

Reini also implores Steyerl's theory of the poor image by means of reproduction in his large and visually jarring paintings of Pogs. Tackily colored, bright, and often accompanied by intense phrases or cartoonishly violent imagery, Pogs represent culturally outdated American iconography, but nonetheless serve as once popular centerpieces for an American attitude. Compared to his minimal works, the Pogs stray from traditional graphically or artistically pleasing norms. The fluorescent and holographic circles radiate with visual noise, yet Reini's playful pocketing of imagery gives the paintings a Stella-esque geometric fluidity that conveys the once obnoxious as lost cultural artifacts. Reini again turns the iconography in on itself by bastardizing an iconic image, this time to re-contextualize the beauty current culture erased.

Through beautiful and limited means, Reini accomplishes a definitive blow to the ivory tower of American innocence forcing those once idealized symbols to be viewed as lewd, secretive subjects, as illicit back room dealers of easily digestible happiness, as shadow-world puppet masters. Though the actions of these figures are physically concealed, their newly conscripted purpose resonates through Reini's manipulated scenes in his manifested world of innocence-as-transgressor.

-Chelsea Thomas

The gallery is open Wednesday - Saturday 11am-5pm. For additional information
ad photographic material, please contact the gallery at bill@billbradgallery.com

