

ZOE KIRKWOOD – *The Screen Set*

When looking at Zoe Kirkwood's earlier installations such as *The Neo-Baroque Spectacle (Installation with strung resin attachments)* (2013), playfulness is immediately striking, and although Kirkwood has decided to transition between high key colour and monochrome in *The Screen Set*, it is obvious that her practice has not become any less playful. The work flies around the room with her innovative use of hanging, placement, materials and space, none of which submit to the conventional restraints of the gallery wall. Kirkwood here emphasises the power and structure that underlies all of her installations by using a subtler yet more diverse palette, removing what some less attentive to her work saw as “decorative”. *The Screen Set* also takes this a step further by integrating 2D and 3D painting, sculpture, design and installation into an amorphous medium culminating in this unique installation.

For Kirkwood, Baroque influence is key - in particular, Bernini and his concept of "bel composto" (translating to "beautiful whole"). The unity of architecture, painting and sculpture combining to form a singular experience - mainly observed in and applied to chapels - undeniably obvious in *The Screen Set*; an abstract, pop chapel for the contemporary age aiming to bring the paintings “off the wall and into our space.”

This exhibition constantly transitions as we walk through it, Kirkwood referring to it like a stage set, with the screens as theatre props that transform the audiences view - reminiscent of the idiosyncratic costumes from Dadaist theatre. *The Screen Set* is like a visual Baroque remix, paintings of targets and delimited colour drips, geometric lattices and sculptural rays of divinity appear at random in our real-world space. Contemporary Pop Art from a society where religious divinity is replaced with the all-truthful screen.

Kirkwood is not pleased with simple illusion - so instead, she literally brings her installation into our world. She frequently refers to the work as “invading” our physical space, which it does - but in a (juxtapositional-y) non-invasive way. Amongst all this excitement, the making, hanging and placement is so eminently considered, which is how and why the work maintains so much energy without descending into chaos.

Kirkwood displays her skills as an artist and artisan, showing consistency and structure to be pivotal in her practice. *The Screen Set* is like interpretation of our unwavering faith to the digital screen, websites like backdrops to the present day theatre of life. The pieces refuse to exist separately from us, and although in reading it may seem that this is "hard" artwork, it's the opposite. The enjoyment and playfulness is undeniable, Kirkwood herself saying "I don't think there is anything wrong with people just enjoying art."

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