

bitforms gallery

Jonathan Monaghan

Disco Beast

October 26 – November 10, 2017

Opening reception: Friday October 26, 6 – 8 PM

Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday, 12 – 6 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to announce *Disco Beast*, Jonathan Monaghan's second solo exhibition with the gallery, which features new sculptural, video, and print works. Drawing on a range of aesthetic references, such as surveillance technology and Beaux-Arts architecture, Monaghan presents an unsettling vision of reality.

The titular work, *Disco Beast*, is a seamlessly looped eighteen minute video installation following a unicorn through abandoned, opulent consumer environments rendered meticulously by the artist using 3D computer animation techniques. These barren, glossy landscapes evoke a hyper-capitalist dystopia, fashioned in reaction to the unchecked optimism of Silicon Valley and the corporate techno-sphere. In the video's climax, an omnipotent cell phone charging station captures the unicorn. Its lifeless body resurrects in a Starbucks bathroom where the film began, restarting an inescapable cycle.

This dystopian tone also characterizes *Police State Condo*, a series of sculptural print works. Security cameras, TSA checkpoints, and ATM machines blend with designer fabrics and penthouse views to create ominous vignettes reminiscent of advertisements for high-end apartments. For Monaghan, who grew up in Queens, this series is a response to the rampant luxury development in New York.

Though the work alludes to a critique of material-driven lifestyles, it celebrates materiality in its demonstration of the artist's devotion to craft in a variety of media. Monaghan painstakingly designs the lighting and architectures in his video and print work to hyper-realistically mimic lavish textures, which also can be seen in his sculpture. The leather-like surface of the *Unicorn In Bondage* was carved from marble using robotic milling techniques, and hand finished by the artist at the foot of a quarry in Italy.

The works in *Disco Beast* allude to an unrealized, sinister reality behind the alluring surfaces of technology and consumerism. Monaghan offers little hope for an escape as the symbol-laden environments elude discernible meaning, leaving the viewer to cope only with impenetrable glistening veneers.

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Jonathan Monaghan (b. 1986, Rockaway Beach, New York) works across print, sculpture, and video installation. Drawing on a wide range of sources, from science fiction to Baroque architecture, he creates bizarre, yet compelling narratives and imagery with the same high-end technology used in Hollywood or by video game designers.

In November, Monaghan's print series, *After Fabergé* is the subject of a unique solo exhibition where the works are displayed alongside original *Fabergé* eggs at The Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, continuing his on-going dialogue with historical artworks. Other solo exhibitions include Spazio Ridotto in Venice, and Market Gallery in Glasgow. Group exhibitions include New Frontiers at the Sundance Film Festival, and The Frist Center for the Visual Art. His work has been featured in The Washington Post, VICE, The Wall Street Journal, The Huffington Post, and The Village Voice.

Monaghan received his BFA from the New York Institute of Technology in 2008 and his MFA from the University of Maryland in 2011.

Founded in 2001, bitforms gallery represents established, mid-career, and emerging artists critically engaged with new technologies. Spanning the rich history of media art through its current developments, the gallery's program offers an incisive perspective on the fields of digital, internet, time-based, and new media art forms.

For images and more information on the exhibit, please visit www.bitforms.com.

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