

bitforms gallery

Siebren Versteeg *Reflection Eternal*

April 20 – June 4, 2017

Opening reception: Thursday, April 20, 6 – 8 PM

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

bitforms gallery presents *Reflection Eternal*, our debut solo exhibition by New York-based artist Siebren Versteeg. The exhibition will be on view from from April 20 – May 28.

At the core of *Reflection Eternal* are three software programs developed by the artist which generate a limitless amount of digital paintings which can be selected, saved, and printed in perpetuity. The programs are presented on a worktable placed in the center of the gallery with examples of their output selected by Versteeg hung throughout the gallery. In these works, the act of making a painting is distilled into the immeasurable potential of algorithms as well as the decision of when to make them stop.

Today (2017) creates and offers an endless march of 16x20 inch canvases which incorporate images scraped in real-time from various online news and image feed sources. In these works, the daily glut of images is combatted by automated gestural responses which literally “see” the image’s content and aim to amend it. As the program ticks through the pictures of the day, it can be seen to reflect an artist’s struggle to respond to the mammoth force of the continuing passing of time.

Another software program, *A Rose* (2017), generates one continuously accruing painting that may be saved and presented as ongoing versions of an endless pursuit. Titled after Jay Defeo’s monumental work which accumulated mass for over eight years, Versteeg’s *A Rose* paints ad infinitum. As the work drifts slowly through time, the subtle intricacies of Versteeg’s code are revealed in an endless array of painterly variables. While Defeo’s *Rose* accrued over a ton of material, necessitating excavation from her studio in 1966, Versteeg’s program speaks to the nomadic flatness and continued dematerialization of ‘thingness’ in the digital age.

Ubiquity takes many of the same painting attributes as *A Rose*, yet forms an ever-evolving, endlessly repeating, wallpaper pattern. Examples of output specifically selected for this installation cover the walls as you enter the gallery while an artist’s book of thirteen sample compositions selected by the artist is also on view.

Framing the workspace/showroom evoked by the software and paintings are two new works from ‘*Dummies*’, Versteeg’s series of Internet connected figurative sculptures made of steel and outfitted with custom software. *Eye in the Sky* (2017) stares blankly into a simulated barrel fire while clutching a monitor that continuously displays feedback images of what it sees as filtered through Google’s search by image technology. Evoking a vagabond traversing a placeless landscape, the figure performs the endless feedback loop that parallels the pursuit of painting itself. *Danny Liker* sits at the central table, programmatically performing the act of pressing the *Like* heart on a computer logged into Versteeg’s own Instagram account...he nearly likes it all.

The exhibition continues Versteeg’s ongoing investigation into the relationship between technology and mortality that emerged in his prescient two-channel video installation, *Untitled (Film)* (2004), which pulled names in real time from birth and death announcement web sites into endless credit scenes of an imagined film. While *Untitled (Film)* situated the viewer in a space between birth and death, *Reflection Eternal* implicates Versteeg himself as he confronts the potential for an algorithm to outlive the physical body.

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Siebren Versteeg was born in 1971 in New Haven, CT. He holds an MFA from The University of Illinois at Chicago (2004) and a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1996). Solo exhibitions of his work have been mounted at University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI; Museum of Art at Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; Hallwalls, Buffalo, NY; Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Michael Jon and Alan, Miami, FL; Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL; and Max Protetch, New York, NY. His work has been included in group exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; The Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; Krannert Art Museum, Urbana-Champaign, IL; The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA; National Museum of Art, Prague, Czech Republic; James Cohan Gallery, New York, NY, and Clifton Benevento, New York, NY. Versteeg has received a MacDowell Fellowship (2016), Illinois Arts Council Fellowship (2005), The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture Merit Fellowship (2004), and Stone Fellowship for Graduate Study from The University of Illinois at Chicago (2002), and was a Kennedy Visiting Artist in Residence at the University of South Florida, Tampa (2009). Prominent collections featuring his work include the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; The Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; and Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI. Versteeg lives and works in Queens, NY.

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 and www.siebrenversteeg.com.

For publicity requests, please contact info@bitforms.com or call (212) 366-6939.