

Marlborough Contemporary

Press Release
Primary Directives
Ivana Bašić, Mike Bouchet, Petra Cortright,
Davina Semo, and Stan VanDerBeek
February 21 –
March 30, 2019

Opening Reception:
February 21, 6 - 8 PM
London

Marlborough Contemporary is pleased to present Primary Directives a group exhibition in our London location. Featuring three generations of American artists working in a variety of mediums, the show centers on a complex of issues surrounding the body, economics and power dynamics. In particular, there is a focus on technology (from fax machines, to web cams) as accelerator and refractor of image and meaning.

Mike Bouchet's Untitled Video (a 4-channel patchwork of 10,000 10-minute pornographic scenes) acts as a conceptual centerpiece for the exhibition—a massive stained-glass window of frictionless capitalism and desire.

Stan VanDerBeek's 1970 work Fax Mural employs that proto-futuristic method of transmission to instantaneously beam stand-ins for his cut paper collages of fashion models and football players to far flung exhibitions, further cementing this artist's reputation as a soothsayer of the information revolution that was to come.

Petra Cortright creates works of video content in a manner familiar to users of Youtube. Where Bouchet appropriates the files directly from servers, Cortright makes new work within the idiom. The exhibitionism feels timely but also evokes the exhilarating mundanity of canonized early video works by Bruce Naumann. Her ebullient two-dimensional works, which originate in digital files, perform a similar critique of painting to beautiful effect.

While more organic and visceral in origin and material, Ivana Bašić's Belay My Light, the Ground is Gone (2018) is no less an illustration of an elaborate system under great stress. The emaciated figure is equipped with the apparatus of its own sustenance and demise, with its respiration, nourishment and elimination a closed system of self-cannibalizing violence. In the inverse, Davina Semo's slender bronze cast of a spanking paddle draws a line between the lofty goals of Minimalism and the power dynamic inherent in the pleasure/pain continuum.

Primary Directives can be thought of as the psychoanalytical id of an algorithm, a marketing strategy, an administrative apparatus or military operation. The number-crunched and compiled desires of countless individuals platformed and target-optimized for maximum effectiveness.

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