

STATION

This is what jouir looks like

29th November — 20th December 2014

I first saw Jonny Niesches *Targets* on Instagram. This application is a simulated community that largely contains propositional marketing projects and acts as a testing ground for many artist and institutions. To *like* a post is to validate and encourage aesthetic observations and descriptions of labor before the project enters the corporeal domain. In preparation for Niesche's exhibition *Nothing goes as deep as decoration* at Station the artist photographed himself in the reflection of his work like the lead singer of the band Queen. His hash tag read # I want to be Freddy Mercury. Niesche was not asking you to validate his practice he was performing in it, celebrating his commitment to it, inviting you to perform in it too. This is how I imagine Niesche rolls, making detailed observations and definitive decisions with his work. These assemblage paintings that you have or are about to experience are made with *jouissance*ⁱ and self-commitment as they cite, dazzle and perform.

In Niesche's circular and hard-edged series of wall works are different versions of *Targets* and *Glitter* paintings in which the loveⁱⁱ of materials becomes mediated and quantifiable in the making process. These paintings are; part voile (a fine meshed fabric) part ink, part mirror, part glitter and part spatial intervention. Niesche makes an amorous remediation of abstraction and minimalism and uses over indulgent, fetishistic, formal, anthropomorphic touches that are full of verve. The *Target* paintings are an assembly of loose weave cloth, ink and mirror. Using contemporary technologies that he sprays onto viole from a Photoshop file that contains an archive of stimulating art historical references where he replicates colours, shapes and forms. The *Glitter* paintings are made (indeed) with glitter that he has evocatively and ecstatically applied onto the canvas by dynamically flogging with the substance in his palm. The canvas is expectant of this action and is primed, cut and protected to form and gather, edge and capture traces of negative space that appear hard edged and white. As a result this collection of materials are adorned affects that run deep and operate as spatial provocations.

There is a subtle call for social interaction (to approach the canvas) in these works that ask you to look and to move and to look again. Analogues to the rigorous precision of politically driven abstract painting that attempt to defer any type of association, Niesche's *Target's* reflect and refract with an aura of the presently performing space. These restrained forms are layered with tradition and are interwoven with a radical voice of dissident and disdain to orthodox convention. They are an acute remediation of recognizable historical works made by macho artists that are now layered with participatory and sensual human actions.

The striation of *Glitter* is inanely subjective it has bling built in and threatens the stratosphere. A material to be avoided - like the plague. A cliché a stereotype of camp and superficiality it is messy and infectious. Glitter is a weapon; used by perky teenagers, drag queens and twinks in hot pants to ward off the enemy. These tiny specks smash the autonomous heroism and order of patriarchy, rousing its cool reductive austerity. It is laid out on the surface like a stammer, it sparkles, bright and flashes with the vibrancy and greed of new money. The *Glitter* works are ambitious, aspirational, as they subvert modernist tropes with subjectivity. These particles refract light and flare, mutter and murmur like a supremely annoying punk assaulting our well-attuned sense.

These guilty ornamental pleasures of a formal past are coated in references to other times and places - they tease at your capitalist comprehension. Niesche joyously revels in the repression of content in his assemblage paintings that are charged references of events. With all this seemingly pure virtue the artist embraces Sydney and its polygonal history the city that he lives and works in by claiming its socio-political terrain. Shimmering forms, reflection, celebration and domination, compress and bind materials into sublime forms that riff off famous parades, convicts in chains and boats and ferries deficient to dock with complex material observations. The labor imbued in these abstract paintings is ordered with depths that thrash a dogma of fetishistic decoration. These temporal events celebrate the body

analogues to *the dark and or repressed side of Minimalism*.ⁱⁱⁱ These works that Niesche makes with an ode to the past double bluffs the now familiar clichéd rigor of abstract minimalism and its once demanding political sentiment in search of a neo enhancing spatial modernity; as he attempts to beam beyond the spatial frame and its constrictions.

Niesche provokes a rupture as he whips us to submission with the allure of his wall works that claim space within which we dualistically observe and perform. The glitter and targets pierce our egos *'to serve a conception of liveliness rather than theatricality*.^{iv} In these reflective canvases, we posture, gaze and daze searching for our selves becoming. These canvases that Niesche presents as ornamental decoration have subtexts to times and places that individually and collectively we recount. These works are *understood as a power technology that puts our soul to work and aims squarely at our human resources*.^v These assemblage paintings ask us to observe as they glare in return and reflexively request that we intensely explore the depths of the surface.

— Nikos Pantazopoulos

ⁱ David Macey describes, *Jouissance*: The French noun means 'enjoyment' in both the sense of pleasure and in the sense in which one speaks of the enjoyment of the rights and privileges. It can also mean orgasm and the cognate verb *jouir* is commonly used to mean 'to come'. For Lacan *jouissance* is always used in the singular and is accompanied by singular definitive article. It evokes an eroticized DEATH-DRIVE and a degree of intensity which takes the subject beyond the PLEASURE PRINCIPLE. Pleasure is described as an obstacle to *jouissance* in that it always leads to a reduction in tension and to a return to homeostasis, or a dynamically stable state; *jouissance* in contrast takes the subject to that extreme point where the erotic borders on death.

Macey, David, *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* pge 210

ⁱⁱ Badiou, Alain quotes Jacques Lacan 'love comes to compensate for the lack of sexual connection' *What is love sexuality and desire* Online 28th November 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3WeGUCzaDAAction>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Graw, Isabelle, *Art and subjecthood, the return of the human figure in semicapitalism* pge 16

^{iv} Ina Bloom, *Media Annimism: Racheal Harrison's Living Images Art and subjecthood, the return of the human figure in Semicapitalism* pge 16

^v Franco, Biffo, Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press 2009), pge 116.