

# STATION

## **Stella Corkery**

*Caravan*

15th March – 17th April 2013

Stella Corkery's practice is determined by an exploration of painterly mark making, reflecting and refracting the codes that characterise history's well-known painting movements. In the current moment, such styles find themselves digitally approximated in the gestures of readily-available painting applications, in particular for smartphones, allowing users to mimic the materiality of paint with pixels, brush presets and adjustment layers.

Digital painting applications reconfigure brushwork within the software interface; presenting mark making techniques as commands and functions, available for rapid combination and pastiche at the whim of a large community of users and artists. This new techno-image flattens and exploits painted tropes, stripping them of their subjectivities and historical character and instead replacing them with a repertoire of endlessly repeatable, digitally-rendered brush strokes. Corkery's practice reverberates within the twin vocabularies of physical painting and digital (virtual) painting and tests the new, uncanny starting points mediated by painting's technological dispersion. Her canvasses bear the rematerialization of digital gestures, asking us how painting might be understood after the advent of the screen.

Michael Sanchez has written of the way that in the context of screen-based image consumption, an allover method of mark making induces an "unfocus" in the eyes of the viewer that is optimal for quick scrolling amongst the busy feeds of images encountered through a laptop or smartphone screen. Aligned with the expectation of transmission through a blog format, Corkery's prodigal output registers the temporality of the infinite scroll. The sheer quantity of Corkery's oeuvre suggests a sort of disposability native to the perpetual reinvention and impermanence of image aggregators, where her paintings will no doubt be shared, once documented in smartphone photographs by visitors or distributed online by the gallery during the exhibition.

Further, by installing the paintings according to a grid template — a format familiar to image sharing sites such as Tumblr — Corkery considers how the pervasive logics and constraints of standardized, screen-based presentation might be translated or imported into the physical gallery space. The allover display of paintings which fills the length of the gallery wall negate the specificity of a placement, instead creating a field of noise, of patterns and textures that emerge only to slip away again.

Corkery's methodology improvises with painted codes, like a set of limited materials that can be repeated, modified, juxtaposed or transformed in any and every way. In doing so, Corkery explores obsolescence and recirculation in relation to the painted mark — marks that are always borrowed from elsewhere, reprised in a feedback loop endlessly repositioning and playing itself out, inquiring into the very identity of contemporary painting.

— This text is a revised version of Henry Babbage's for *Stella Corkery: Abandon All Complaints – The Social Life of Painting*, Freedom Farmers, New Zealand Artists Growing Ideas, Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki, pg 11, 2013.