

ARTFORUM

DECENTER

ABRONS ARTS CENTER

466 Grand Street

February 17–April 7



Douglas Coupland, *Imagine a Car Crash . . .*, 2011, acrylic and latex on canvas, 72 x 72”.

The first Armory Show in 1913 effectively introduced American audiences to modern art; the vast, widely publicized art fair served as the United States debut for European avant-garde movements like Cubism and Fauvism, and provided major exposure for stateside modernists like Charles Sheeler and Marsden Hartley. “DECENTER: An Exhibition on the Centenary of the 1913 Armory Show” at the Abrons Arts Center—the initial announcement of the venue’s construction was made in 1963 on the occasion of the Armory’s fiftieth anniversary—pays homage to the show’s particular influence on contemporary art by featuring digital-age perspectives on Cubist space and abstraction.

Appropriately, the exhibition’s website hosts a rhizomatic cluster of artists’ projects, from Diane Dwyer’s psychedelic GIF, *WORRY/don’t*, 2011, to Rafaël Rozendaal’s abstraction-inspired animation, *from the dark past .com*, 2009. At the physical exhibition, Franklin Evans’s sprawling installation, *Bluenudesdissent*, 2013, strives to emulate the website’s encompassing connectivity. Evans “hyperlinks” the exhibition’s artists to the stars of the 1913 Armory, charting the intergenerational connections between them (humorists Duchamp and Gabriel Orozco, painters Cézanne and N. Dash) through color-coded tape and juxtaposed images of their work sourced from the Internet. Elsewhere, artists render the language of digital media, like Douglas Coupland’s painting, *Imagine a Car Crash . . .*, 2011, which pairs geometric QR codes with

Gerhard Richter–esque color blocks, or John Houck’s creased digital print, *Untitled #155,809,999 combinations of a 2X2 grid, 30 colors*, 2013, which uses digital technology to exaggerate the compositional strategies of serial Minimalism.

The most provocative works, however, address the abstractions of history and power. In Liz Magic Laser’s *The Digital Face*, 2012, dancers perform the gesticulations of Presidents George H. W. Bush and Barack Obama during their respective 1990 and 2012 State of the Union addresses. Andrea Geyer’s drawing, *Indelible*, 2013, plumbs the gender politics of the first Armory Show, depicting the names of the 1913 fair’s female artists whose reputations now pale in comparison to their male counterparts. Decenteredness, in this curatorial framework, revises the 1990’s term of globalization. Instead of an all-connected international field of artists, the exhibition’s focus on virtual networks shifts both the methods of artistic practice and the exchange of ideas to an all-dispersed system that seeks representation.

-Vogel, Wendy. “Decenter,” Artforum: New York, 2012