

Wall Street International

Ena Swansea: untitled nightlife

21 January - 15 February 2014 at Friedman Benda Gallery, New York



Ena Swansea, master of ceremonies, 2014, oil on graphite on canvas, 48 x 60 inches, 121.9 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy of Friedman Benda and the artist. Photography by: Christopher Burke Studio.

The show 'untitled nightlife' has new paintings installed in a reverse chronology, plus two artist-proofs of a sofa.

One enters the rooms at dawn and leaves at midnight. To break out of the pupal-case of nightclub scenes, I made a series of paintings about the city at night. They repurpose the incubation vibe for a different effect, as meditative as the club scenes are not. The show can be entered in two ways. Both entryways refract pieces of history, whether old-school 1980s gay culture or the Hudson River School of painting, as the bodies from the nightclubs are left to reassemble their connectivity, hidden behind a veil of big nature.

night and day reversible sofa is two sofas in one. Like the paintings on the walls, the sofa shifts between night and day. It grew from thoughts of trailer-park wire basket style lawn furniture. It's a web of steel, with a shifting gradation of auto body paint, dark to light, supporting a hammock of burlap. The piece is like a drawing, where the lines become 3D. Within the lines comes painting, in the form of cushions.

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Going past a boundary of innovative technology, one side of the cushions becomes images from my paintings. They are baked into the material at 400 degrees, into a fabric designed for casino gaming tables. The paintings make a feedback loop between the images and the people sitting on them. The other side of the cushions is completely different, a fresh clarifying morning haze of shiny white fur.

A sculpture for hanging out, the object seemed called for by the idea of the show, summoning the open environment (nightclub) into the closed one (art gallery.)

As a child I had a collection of reversible clothing. With the sofa the cushions can simply be flipped over, and instantly create a second, different thing. It would be so great if reversal were always an option.
E.S.

Friedman Benda Gallery

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Opening hours

Monday - Saturday
From 10am to 6pm

Related images

- 1, 2 & 3. Ena Swansea, Installation views, Courtesy of Friedman Benda and the artist. Photography by: Christopher Burke Studio.
- 4. Ena Swansea, The Box, 2013, oil on graphite on canvas, 72 x 90 inches, 182.9 x 228.6 cm. Courtesy of Friedman Benda and the artist. Photography by: Christopher Burke Studio.
- 5. Ena Swansea, snow at night 2, 2014, oil on graphite on canvas, 90 x 114 inches, 228.6 x 289.6 cm. Courtesy of Friedman Benda and the artist. Photography by: Christopher Burke Studio.



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