



NEW YORK – NICOLE EISENMAN AT ANTON KERN THROUGH JUNE 25TH, 2016

June 19th, 2016

Blurring together vastly divergent styles, historical epochs and scenes, painter Nicole Eisenman's work has defined itself as some of the era's most stylistically inventive, moving from hyper-stylized abstraction and almost absurdist arrangements through to impeccably rendered portraiture and often lyrical arrangements of figures in space. Offering a counterpoint to the artist's current exhibition at the New Museum, Anton Kern is currently playing home to a series of new works by the artist, underscoring the artist's ever-changing stylistic approaches, and aesthetic interpretation of image-making in the 21st Century.

Eisenman's work sits at a juncture of the post-digital that seems to pervade her pieces while remaining concretely visible. Screens, smartphones, and even the odd cyborg pop up across the exhibition, creating visual counterpoints alternate between focal points for her characters and mere background noise. At the same time, this ever-present consumer tech is repositioned by the fragmented figuration of her subjects. Cartoonish inversions of the human form are joined by exactly realistic companions, or serve as visual conflicts, as if the separation of figures by these digital technologies push the character's peripheral awareness into a surreal transformation. This sense of interaction and communication seems to frequently underscore her work, perhaps most prominently in *Long Distance*, where the artist recreates the sensation of digital isolation through the depiction of a video chat, showing a pair mutually obscured to the viewer through the gaze of the computer screen, creating a sense of connection between her subjects while their faces remain hidden. They are figures in a world of their own, one that, through the particular capabilities of digital communication, are locked into a relation within the picture frame that underscores their own personal connection. There is no exterior world her, as the act of watching, expression and interaction grow closer together, and further away from exterior parties.

This distinction is notable, and follows through many of the show's larger works. Eisenman's characters are bound up in expression through media, through selections or withheld attention. Their worlds are internal, and their poses imply a universe that is all the more alluring for its prominent absence from the image. It's perhaps this established construct that makes the show's contrasting works like *TM* and *Lee*, one of the more traditionalist portraits in the show, all the more striking and powerful. Here, Eisenman's stylistic inventiveness, and her masterful sense of color take center stage, and feed back into a further appreciation of her more cluttered, lively compositions. At their core, the painterly aspect of these works are impossible to ignore, but its through these momentary visual prompts, a sense of pulling the viewer away from the details of her work and towards the image itself, that makes Eisenman's paintings so compelling, as if a sudden hint to the viewer to put away their phone while they pass through the gallery, and to look at her pictures as worlds of their own.

Eisenman's work is on view through June 25th.



Nicole Eisenman, *Weeks on the Train* (2015)



Nicole Eisenman, *Long Distance* (2015)



Nicole Eisenman, *Morning Studio* (2016)