

junior projects

Stuart Elster

Cinderella Liberty

May 4 - June 1, 2014

Opening Reception: Sunday May 4, 2014 6-8 p.m.

JUNIOR PROJECTS is pleased to present *Cinderella Liberty*, an exhibition of new paintings by Stuart Elster. In his latest work, Elster broadens his inquiry into the nature of power structures vis-à-vis "Dazzle Camouflage," a graphic technique used during the World Wars to alter the visual perception of a ship's location.

During World War I, Norman Wilkinson, a marine painter and Royal Naval Volunteer, designed abstract geometric patterns inspired by Vorticism, a British art and poetry movement that grew out of Cubism. These patterns, otherwise known as Dazzle Camouflage, distorted the position of Allied vessels in the visual field to protect them from German U-Boats attempting to sink them. The Dazzle patterns do not conceal but rather create an optical illusion meant to confuse a ship's perceived location and direction upon the water. In *Cinderella Liberty*, Elster examines the perceptual problem posed by the disruptive patterns projected upon the ships. The show borrows its title from U.S. Navy slang for a hurried shore leave that requires sailors to return to their ships before midnight. Elster's canvases similarly evoke anxious freedoms in both historical modernism and the history of mechanized warfare.

Elster's fully saturated, confectionary-like canvases are composed of three tonalities and calculated movements of the palette knife. Elster doesn't paint the image of the ships as much as the patterns painted on them by the camoufleur. In doing so, he investigates notions of abstraction, representation, and visual distortion in their relationship to the canvas, and also to the history of painting. With this body of work, Elster considers the line between real and three-dimensional space—just as paint upon canvas creates its own optical illusion so too do Dazzle patterns.

Stuart Elster received his MFA from Yale University School of Art and his BFA from the University of the Arts Philadelphia, PA. Exhibited internationally, Elster's work was most recently included in *Reliable Tension, Or: How to win a Conversation About Jasper Johns*, Yale, CT curated by John Pilson and *Streamlines. Ephemeral Presence in Contemporary Art*, Vaishali, India curated by Lise McKean. Other select exhibitions include Lucas Schoormans Gallery, NY, Schmidt Contemporary, Saint Louis, MO, Galerie 5 ème Étage, Paris, France, and Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin, Germany.

Junior Projects is located at 139 Norfolk Street, one block east of Essex Street between Rivington and Stanton Streets. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday, from 11 am to 6 pm, and by appointment. For more information or press materials, please contact Lance Goldsmith at lance@juniorprojects.com or 212-228-8450.