

Displays
by Paula Carralero Bierzynska

My work relates reverse glass painting techniques to the screens of the digital devices through which we produce and consume images daily.

After experimenting with different pictorial frames, combining painting with printing techniques and photography (photographic emulsions on glass, ghost prints on lithographic stones, scanning of overlapping drawings...), I developed two parallel groups of work: large-format paintings on acrylic glass and, more recently, on glass and small format paintings on phone displays.

This material arrangement requires a reversal of the conventional painting procedure; the first layer of paint is seen at the forefront, while the final layer of paint resides in the background. I understand the almost transparent glaze as geological layers that construct the space.

Within the European iconographic tradition, reverse glass painting is above all a sacred matter. In my paintings, satellites, drones or security cameras assume the role of divine omnipresence. While in *Eye/Maschine* Harun Farocki establishes the relationship between the technology of recording and violence, I paint, from a very human point of view, the disembodied view of satellites and digital simulation programs used for the domination of body, territory and nature.

As opposed to the traditionally horizontal format of landscape art, my large format reverse-glass works are in a vertical, portrait format, recalling the aspect ratio of an enlarged mobile phone.

As a hiker, I paint the spaces I walk through with other hikers: islands that will be erased in the coming years, buildings under construction, endangered forest. The paintings channel the fragmented sensations of a group traversing contested territories through the devices we use for orientation.

In a painting by Clara Peeters, we could see her multiplied reflection in a gold vase: she appears in multiple with the painter's palette. Object and subject melt together and become mutually interdependent. As the spectator views my paintings through acrylic or glass, their own reflection is always imposed on the painting. As each subtle change of position transforms the painting, so to the act of contemplation transformed into a dynamic process. To see the painting is to move through them.

My small-format paintings rehabilitate broken smartphone displays. Inspired by the Japanese technique *Kintsugi*, the painting establishes a dialogue with the scratches and fractures of the display and transforms it. The phones appear dark and shut off until the spectator takes the device into her hand and holds it against a light source revealing the painting behind the glass.

Mobile devices allow us to live in different spatial-temporal dimensions and perspectives simultaneously. As an immigrant living in Berlin for seven years, they allow me to be connected to my place of origin. At the same time, mobile devices are tracking our physical impressions and movements. The way we judge reality may be automated: the

machine looks, sees and hears through us and sometimes anticipates our next steps. Through my painting, I want people to autonomously and critically see the images obtained by the machines.

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