



ART & DESIGN

Julien Bismuth: 'An image as the _____ of a surface'

JAN. 16, 2014

Art in Review

By MARTHA SCHWENDENER

*Simone Subal**131 Bowery, at Grand Street, second floor, Lower East Side
Through Feb. 16*

In the 1950s and '60s, artists used silk-screened images in their canvases to signal a shift away from the painterly hand. Now that apparatus has become artwork, and Julien Bismuth is showing the silk screen itself.

Pink mesh screens sit on the floor, leaning against the wall, sometimes stacked like an archive. Above them are images printed in dark gray ink directly onto the wall. The images are of Mr. Bismuth's hands, sometimes manipulating a piece of paper.

As the show's title suggests, Mr. Bismuth is concerned not only with how images are made, but with their relationship to surfaces as well. Checklist titles fill in the blank: "An image as the animation of a surface," or an "alteration," or "vexation." Beneath the surface lurk other issues, though.

Two videos focus on what we experience privately in the realm of images. One features a woman's face bathed in the Technicolor glow of "The Wizard of Oz" as she watches it on television. The other is of Mr. Bismuth filmed from behind, reading Raymond Roussel's 1904 poem "The View" — itself a long description — in his Brooklyn studio at sunset.

Finally, an audio work features an actress reading "statements of intention" by artists, pop stars and others. Ripped from context, intentions mean just about nothing. Here, at least, they serve as poetic reminders of the

great synapse between art and experience.

A version of this review appears in print on January 17, 2014, on page C36 of the New York edition with the headline: Julien Bismuth: 'An Image as the _____ of a Surface'.

© 2014 The New York Times Company