

VICTORIA DEBLASIO
on
Elise Thompson's *Threw It Through It*



Window (pink icing) 2016, frosted vinyl over acrylic on wood ~48"x34"

The person that you are in public is not the same as who you are in private. Humans are consistently teeter-tottering between two extremes; we long for intimacy to validate our sense of self, yet we deny ourselves this same intimacy due to the fear of over-sharing and the paranoia of judgement.

Sometimes these feelings can overlap resulting in us revealing snippets of our private selves, then subsequently flipping the switch to turn our guard back on again once we've realized someone has come just a little too close.

Elise Thompson's solo show for SOUP, *Threw It Through It*, speaks powerfully on this topic, physically and visually placing us as the viewer into this interplay of the private versus the public, the guarded versus the vulnerable. Utilizing neon pink vinyl as her canvas, Thompson has constructed a

visual representation of this concept of private and public. Beautifully vibrant colors are built upon one another to create a textural barrier on the almost translucent vinyl.

Thompson's piece *Muddled At The Bottom* has small sections of the vinyl can still be seen under the rough edges of the acrylic, creating dimension and enabling a playful dialogue with the viewer. The color palette is mostly warm, casting an inviting luminescent glow off the almost clinical white of the gallery wall. At first glance, I was immediately drawn to it just for the color alone. The soft pinks mixed with the bright yellow felt comforting and unassuming, giving me the chance to approach this piece without feeling overwhelmed. The cool blues mixed in with these warmer colors gave my eyes a resting point, helping me to establish a more personal and intimate dialogue with the piece.

Allowing you to see through fixed sections of the paint brings in that intimate gaze yet simultaneously obstructs it with the built-up opaque layers and jagged texture. Your eye is set in a constant state of motion throughout the picture plane, replicating a somewhat tumultuous relationship with the self of letting someone in and keeping someone out. I felt this visceral push and pull, feeling engaged and enticed by the color while simultaneously feeling like a voyeur through the blockade of thick acrylic.

On the opposite spectrum of Thompson's work are her more minimal pieces like *Bars Between II*. Instead of the intense color spectrum calling me over to the work, I was met face-to-face with a softer side of Thompson. Two bars, painted in a gradient scale of pink, run horizontally through the center of the piece. This is mimicking a support of a canvas, although instead of there being a stretched canvas material over the structure, we're now met with a translucent frosted vinyl. You can see through it and you still understand what the structure itself is; a stripped-down version of a traditional canvas that cohesively fits with the exhibition through her subtle use of those gradient pinks that can be seen throughout her other works.

This is showcasing her concept of vulnerability by allowing you to see directly through the canvas. I felt more connected to Thompson, more like there was now an open dialogue because of this 'pulling back on the curtain' effect. What was most interesting about this piece though was that the closer that you got to the work, the more muddled and unclear the bars became because of the frosted vinyl, resembling a protective layer. When we interact with others we like to keep people at somewhat of a comfortable distance, allowing ourselves to interact merely on a surface level. We feel uncomfortable when someone gets closer, and we tend to close ourselves off or hide away things about ourselves under a veil. I felt, while moving close to and further away from this piece, this kind of duality of self. It is this conflict of wanting to share versus not wanting someone to see too much of ourselves that shapes how we communicate with those around us.

Threw It Through It left me feeling very self-aware of how I carry myself in life. The whole time I was making my way through the exhibition, I was questioning my own personal boundaries of vulnerability and communication and how these boundaries can get directly in my way. There's never much of an open dialogue about these two crucial social behaviors. Thompson, however, has given a space for these types of conversations to happen in a very impactful way; impactful in that it made me take a second look at myself, causing me to re-evaluate my feelings on how I show vulnerability and a willingness to be open with those around me.

Elise Thompson's Portfolio
www.elisethompson.com/

Thank you Victoria.

Sincerely,

SOUP experimental