

CASEY KAPLAN

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ARTNEWS

REVIEWS

LIAM GILLICK AT CASEY KAPLAN

BY Alex Greenberger

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Liam Gillick, 'Phantom Structures,' 2016, installation view.

In the 20 years since he burst onto the international art scene, Liam Gillick has been loosely affiliated with the YBAs and the relational aesthetics contingent, but this British artist doesn't fall cleanly into either group. His work is more cerebral than that of other YBAs, and denser and more grounded than the relational-aesthetics adherents. So where does Gillick fit? The simple answer is: nowhere.

As this Casey Kaplan exhibition, titled "Phantom Structures," makes clear, Gillick's work was ahead of its time—more like what younger artists are doing today than what his mid-career colleagues are producing.

The artist's predilection for sans-serif gibberish, printed here in the form of vinyl wall text, persists, as do his Donald Judd-inspired Plexiglas sculptures. The pristine coldness of the installation evokes a dysfunctional office space.

Gillick has written extensively about capitalism, production, and consumption, and it's easy to fall into a rabbit hole of art theory when thinking about his work. One could spend hours pondering whether Gillick is referring to Constructivism or Minimalism, or whether his text works are intended to be critical of corporate language.

However far-out its ideas may be, this show feels very much of the here and now. "Phantom Structures" seems to reflect a contemporary kind of business: the tech startup. Consider, for example, the lemon-yellow, maroon, and pine-green Plexiglas sculptures lined up in the gallery, and then consider the fanciful colors that dot the offices of Google, Facebook, and Apple. The titles, too, are revealing: *Affiliations Screen* (2016), a tower of pale-blue pieces of Plexiglas, may refer to computer screens, while *Growth Elevation* (2016), a series of unevenly sized red rods, calls to mind a bar graph from a PowerPoint slide.

With its lack of electronics and screens, Gillick's work is fairly analog. It is now the job of younger artists to move Gillick's work in a more digital direction—for example, Simon Denny and DIS, whose Internet-inspired installations also mimic corporate offices unsuited to productivity. In that sense, Gillick's work has been predictive, and one wonders if there isn't still more to learn from his art.



Liam Gillick, *Afragmentoffuturehistory*, 2002, glittered vinyl, 57½ x 78 inches, installation view.