

In Heaven, Everything is Fine

a solo exhibition by TEN Collective member Kathy Rodriguez
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Opening Reception: Saturday, July 6, 2013, 6-9 p.m.

Artist Statement

Cats are the most fickle and nefarious creatures to command our domestic space. They cause massive allergic reactions; scratch and bite; draw blood; kill for pleasure; and mark their territory.

However, humankind has perpetually honored the cat. For example, there is a long-standing history of the cat in art. From Ancient Egypt to Dutch Baroque to the present day, cats have fascinated and inspired artists by their mystery, moods, independence, affection, and tactility. The current exhibitions of cat-themed art at White Columns and Flux Factory in New York as well as the Brooklyn Museum attest to a contemporary interest in the subject. Youtube hosts thousands of cat videos that are viewed millions of times. Cat owners post pictures of their cats online to share with the universe. Cat fashion has even appeared – check out the book *Fashion Cats* here, for instance.

I'm personally guilty of cat-obsession, I know. I've sat in front of my computer for hours watching cat videos on Youtube (and I have subjected my students to these cat videos before starting class with them – but they seem to like it). I wish I had a dress printed with cats. I post pictures of Buddy and my beloved and deceased Leo on Facebook. But, even though I love him and he can be so sweet, I also think Buddy is a total asshole.

This show is in part about my attempt to harmonize the opposing feelings I have about felines. I tried to sharpen a Lisa Frank-like aesthetic with harsh digitization and blind attention to composition to communicate this love/hate relationship in the digital prints. They are testaments to my time in the bizarre, Lynchian universe of Internet cats. I present the prints with cheesy mats and cheap frames to combine high and low art to further harmonize the content's oppositions.

But, as a whole the show is more about establishing place, a running theme in the art I produce. The installation, which is composed of graphite drawings on paper sourced from photos of cats by friends and strangers through Facebook and cut paper cloud shapes, is meant to reference our collective cat obsessions, but also to suggest the joy of owning a cat. I tried create a space in which I'd love to be – surrounded by loving, sweet, non-biting cats. In the paintings, I've tried to give a pleasing and harmonious place to the two major cats in my life. To me, the variety of media communicates the variety of ways people approach their obsessions with cats.

The demands of my work, both in and out of the studio, often cause me to want to hole up for a few hours (or months), like a cat in a cardboard box. This show is an exploration of the space I've been going to most to deal with that stress. This, for me, could be heaven, where everything is fine – hopefully balanced and harmonious, with a good deal of variety to keep me entertained.