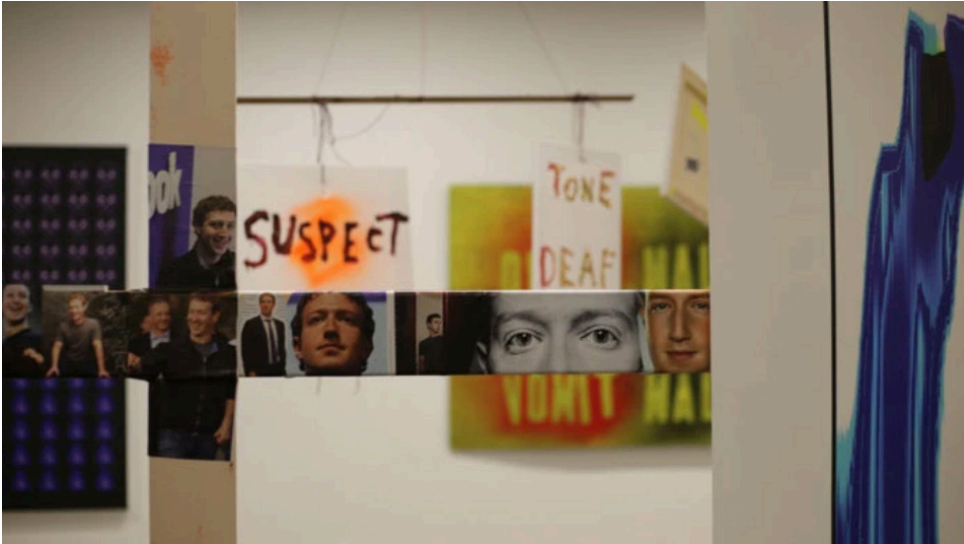


VICE

NOVEMBER 14, 2016

PAINTINGS FROM THE WAR FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OR, THAT TIME MARK FLOOD MADE A COLLAGE OF MARK ZUCKERBERG.

by Kelsey Lannin



Mark Zuckerberg installation and SJW Mobile, 2016 Mark Flood at EverGold[Projects].

Problematic. Suspect. Tone deaf: All descriptors about Mark Flood's work left behind in comment sections, according to the artist. They're also the words written on a mobile, titled SJW, hanging in Flood's latest solo show *Paintings From The War For Social Justice* at Ever Gold [Projects] in San Francisco.

"He's already confronting the issues people are going to have with his work," Gallery Director Andrew McClintock explains to The Creators Project.

His characteristically antagonistic tack is baked into the show with acrylic, stenciled letters on canvas which command you to "DRINK MALE TEARS VOMIT MALE TEARS," "WEAPONIZE COLLEGE STUDENTS," and "WORK WITH EXISTING PEOPLE THAT REPRESENT DEATH IN TECH," among other things.

McClintock says Flood wanted to do a site-specific, tech-centered show in San Francisco to confront issues that surface around discourse on social media and the censorship imposed by the platforms themselves. "He's always done the text paintings and the messages change over time. I know some of them are definitely questioning the aspects of tech and if it's problematic or not," McClintock says.

Flood, the former frontman for experimental post-punk band, Culturecide, bemusedly describes the reactions he's gotten from the show: "As I watch people walk into my show I kind of look at them and go 'that one gets it and that one is oblivious, that one gets it...'"

ZERO FUCKS GIVEN [orange gutter], one of Flood's favorite pieces (and phrases), hangs behind rows of an acrylic canvas installation titled *1000 LIKES*. The piece half-fills the small backroom of the gallery, a static version of a larger piece from the artist's Gratest Hits show at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston earlier this year. The 5,000-piece version was interactive and people were invited to vote with the likes for their favorite piece. "The whole exhibit had a four-foot snowdrift of likes in front of every piece and it was like disfiguring. I was like 'I made this happen,'" Flood admits.

Flood says he remembers when the political left was the "champion of free speech" and is appalled at the treatment of controversial figures like alt-right social media supervillain Milo Yiannopoulos, who was ultimately kicked off of Twitter for harassing actress Leslie Jones.

"This is the most scared I've been about art since the 70s when I was interacting with punk rock and it made me go burn my record collection" Flood tells The Creators Project. "That's the way I feel about how things are now. The attacks on free speech just blow my mind. People are either very aware of it or completely oblivious to it."

"The culture is pivoting and I want to pivot with it. But you have to be careful that you don't, you know, kill yourself," Flood says. "But so far, career suicide has always worked for me."