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MIKA TAJIMA AT 11R

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Installation view of "Mika Tajima: Embody," 2016, at 11R. Charles Benton/Courtesy 11R

Although Mika Tajima's seductive woven paintings, which are made using a Jacquard loom, might be considered too decorative, they are actually quite subversive. Though very pretty, they conceal a sour, ugly reality beneath their striking surfaces.

Filling 11R's two Lower East Side spaces, the show, titled "Embody," is composed of several series. One of them, "Negative Entropy," consists of paintings that, according to a press release, are based on images of noise from machines. That is why the patterns, rendered in psychedelic oranges, yellows, and pinks, resemble sound waves. With this information in mind, viewers are likely to find the "Negative Entropy" paintings unsettling. The person who operates the machinery is not given any credit or represented in any way—the worker is absent

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from the piece itself. (The title reveals each worker's name and location.) Capitalism effectively turns workers into data; production becomes more important than the producer.

The "Negative Entropy" works also resemble Abstract Expressionist paintings. One piece, based on information from NYU's data-science center, is over eight feet tall and split in the middle, evoking Barnett Newman and Gerhard Richter. Here, with Newman's and Richter's styles rendered cold and muted, the suggestion is that abstraction is not something beautiful or intellectual anymore. The style has been rendered as data just as Abstract Expressionism, once an avant-garde movement, has been co-opted by the art market.

Tajima's "Furniture Art" series also picks up on this theme, albeit in a less successful way. The works, made from spray enamel encased in thermoformed acrylic, look like mist hovering over a dark sea. (Each painting takes its name from an island.) These works look like industrial versions of paintings by Mark Rothko—perhaps too much

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so. What Tajima is attempting (a look at how capitalism alienates workers through industrial processes) is smart, but the paintings in this series are prone to being overly decorative.

The feeling of being ensnared by an information-oriented economy is more concrete in Tajima's "Meridian" works, a series of rolling desk chairs cocooned in resin. These suggest dead creatures under cloth—one work is even suspended from the ceiling on a hook, like meat at a butcher shop. All of the sculptures have LED lights in them that cause them to turn purple or blue, changing according to the emotional content of tweets that Tajima has compiled following an algorithm. Ultimately, the "Meridian" works show that in capitalism, everyone is always a producer of content or objects. In that way, we're all pieces of data, and through production, we get woven into the ugly fabric of the economy.