

“Amy Ellingson,” *Bay Area Now 3*

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By René de Guzman

Amy Ellingson’s paintings are at home in a media-saturated world that is infinitely capable of capturing, replicating and transmitting visual information across many platforms—from print media to television, internet communications, and an array of personal gadgets with LCD technology. Ellingson’s work not only examines the impressive capacity with which these things generate and transfer visual material, but also the accelerating rates at which the images we see are recycled, repurposed and sent out again into the arena of display, consumption and reuse. The artist’s vibrant works serve as markers for the contemporary visual experience, composed of combinations, traces and echoes of the stimuli that course before our eyes on a daily basis. These grand-scale paintings are created with encaustic paint, a material that appeals to the tactile sense, and grounds us while experiencing Ellingson’s agitated surfaces.

Recently, Ellingson’s works have taken on more abstract qualities, and her source materials have become less recognizable, more fleeting and increasingly fragmented. It is as though her practice of borrowing, changing and recomposing visual matter has kept pace with the world’s accelerating circulation of images from which she draws her inspiration. Rather than being a kind of palimpsest for all the things we see, Ellingson’s paintings now appear to record something even more elusive. Her works seem to be less about what passes before our eyes, and more about the vapor trails left in their wake.