

# ArtReview



Tania Bruguera

## Jessica Stockholder *Door Hinges*

*Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago 12 September – 16 January*

There is no one word in the English language that rhymes with 'orange'. Perhaps this is why we hear of 'tangerine' trees and 'marmalade' skies in song, while 'orange' is left out of popular melodies. Its closest assonance is 'door hinge', which, to credit the source, I believe I heard through one of Salem's observations in an episode of *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. I remember thinking how great it was that 'door hinge' conceptually mirrored the action of thought – a turning, a pivot – required to achieve a solution for the word without a rhyme, just as 'orange' contained its own phenomenology, since it is both a thing and a colour: an orange is orange; it explains itself.

The impressiveness of language is that both 'orange' and its makeshift rhyme operate on both auditory and visual levels. Jessica Stockholder's exhibition can be seen as a plural performance of this relationship. On the border of cacophonous, the visual tone of the exhibition is purposefully dissonant – a false rhyming scheme of its own. An overall palette unites the disjointed paintings and assembled objects

on view. Brilliant purples, sharp corals and vivid blues are rolled onto the walls in haste; swathes of carpet are geometrically installed in jagged shapes along the floor and continue to scale the wall upward; security mirrors are installed at various heights, multiplying the effect of the gestural space while also making it appear smaller in the distance. The images seen in the mirror reflect the viewer within this cartoonish maze.

While the exhibition appears dominated by sculpture and features *Assists 1–3*, her latest body of work, Stockholder's installation is executed in the expanded field of painting. The all-over style of the installation uses the gallery itself as a canvas. Within this landscape, the three primary objects for the *Assists* sculptures are placed: a Smart electric car, a piano and a vintage desk. The itinerant 'art objects' (mainly brightly coloured materials or abstract cutout forms) are pressed up against these main items, though not always directly bound to them. Each of the readymade objects is tightly hugged by a bright yellow strap with

the text 'Lift-all Load Hugger' repetitively stamped across its surface in black ink. The potential that these items are made for lifting sets up a Sisyphean tone to the installation. Stockholder's statement on painting carries a succinct message: the mass of its history will always weigh heavily on conceptual practices. And still we lift it.

The quality of Stockholder's undying formalistic approach to the readymade object, which in the past seemed to be loose and indirect, shines in the context of *Door Hinges*. When Stockholder has control over the space, a viewer gets the sense that she has landed. As a medium known for its many deaths and reinventions, painting is taken to the extremity in Stockholder's practice as both a formal and intellectual object to be wrestled with. The installation appears to satisfy Stockholder's want to find the right object-based language to equal painting's long past. Her verse is congruous enough. Even if it is a false rhyme, it is harmonious.

*Stephanie Cristello*



*Door Hinges*, 2015 (installation view). Photo: Evan Jenkins.  
Courtesy the artist and Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago