



The Near Distant Future
Samantha Bittman & Jeffrey Dell

June 16th–July 13th, 2019 • Opening June 16th, 4-6 pm

Super Dutchess is pleased to present new works by Samantha Bittman and Jeffrey Dell.

Bittman and Dell play with visual perception, asking: what does the viewer think they see? A visual system is laid bare in each work, challenging the possibilities of the optical illusion. Through the complexity of their imagery, the artists draw out the physical process of visual translation that occurs between our eyes and our brains.

In Bittman's work, the image and the object are one and the same, woven together in thread; her reverberating patterns perceptually hover almost independently above the picture plane. In Dell's work, the image and surface are completely unified through extreme flatness; the visual "objects" twist in and out of the third dimension.

Both artists are invested in the aura of physical craft, yet they employ references to the digital realm. Bittman's weavings nod to the omnipresence of the pattern in our lives, and Dell's screenprints allude to an experience of life in an RGB colorspace. In both approaches there is extreme precision, but it is mixed with warmth through the inclusion of fabrics, plaids, and ribbons.

In a recent study of optical illusions, the theoretical cognitive scientist Mark Changizi considers the role of time, and suggests that humans have evolved an ability to “see” a fraction of a second into the future:

“Changizi asserts that the human visual system has evolved to compensate for neural delays by generating images of what will occur one-tenth of a second into the future. This foresight enables humans to react to events in the present, enabling humans to perform reflexive acts like catching a fly ball and to maneuver smoothly through a crowd.”¹

In Changizi’s theory, this visual foresight explains the jumps and shifts our brain experiences while viewing an optical illusion. This theory rings true when viewing the work of Bittman and Dell, who create glitches of sight through their application of shape, form, color, and patterns. Using techniques such as simultaneous contrast illusion and aftereffects, the artists generate physical vibrations in images that are not in motion, and three-dimensional forms where none exist. In those instants, it is as if our brains have stepped for a second into the future, only to be pulled back to the present and left with a memory of what we just saw.

Though formally working in only two dimensions, Bittman and Dell touch upon the third and fourth dimensions through vibrating images and trompe l'oeil forms. In *The Near Distant Future*, the artists address our ability to control the experience of what we see, and the unexpected optical thrills our brains can serve us.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Changizi