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**Valerie Keane, *Afterburner* (detail), 2016,** stainless steel, acrylic, 68 x 14 x 2".

PARIS

### Valerie Keane

HIGH ART

1 rue Fromentin

September 10 - October 15

Hung in the gallery's large windows, Valerie Keane's futuristic whirligigs demand streetside attention. Made of opaque and transparent acrylic sheets, the trio of sculptures—*Afterburner*, *The Enemy (Long Armed Sun)*, and *Skinsuit at the Castle* (all works 2016)—glimmer as they spin. Inside the gallery, the fluorescent lights add a sci-fi luminosity to the installation; their blaze highlights the details. Inlaid with iridescent Matisse-esque cutouts, and corseted with wires, Keane's dangling lures resemble little galaxies, scaffolded with steel.

The press release excerpts Thomas Pynchon's almost Pulitzer prize-winning 1973 novel, *Gravity's Rainbow*, which surrounds World War II's V-2 rockets. Keane pulled quotes from

a first-person rape passage in which an orgasm-inducing bondage suit is forcibly applied to the narrator: "Things, memories, no way to distinguish them any more, went tumbling downward through my head . . . from my vertex, curling, brightly colored hallucinations . . . amusing lines of dialogue, *objet's d'art* . . . Was this 'submission,' then—letting all these go?"

Increasingly realistic in the age of avatars, Pynchon's description of a fractured, schizophrenic identity is given new physicality by Keane. Staring into her work, one finds one's face broken, obscured by the irregular surfaces and perpetual oscillation

The images her sculptures produce are beautiful but unreachable; they are impossible to objectively document. Like mirrors, their appearances depend on ephemeral factors: time, weather, caprice. If you examine her impaled plastics too closely, her Milky Way clouds begin to look like bionic skeletons. If Pynchon's book is about breaking cycles, the conflict between predestination and free will, then Keane's work is a sharp commentary on how this conversation pertains to the making of contemporary abstract art.

— Kat Herriman

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