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Jessica Eaton: Iterations (I) at Galeria Antoine Ertaskiran  
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Iteration is a processual conjuring act that photographic artist Jessica Eaton has finessed once again in the works in this exhibition. It is a standard building block of algorithms in the context of mathematics or computer science, and Eaton has made it a cornerstone of her colour theory (and practice: her rigorous methodology is radiant and its cornucopia seemingly bottomless) and with exemplary results.

In the works exhibited here, Eaton has really upped her game, although the truth is that her work has been in an upward spiral for some time. This the first of three forthcoming solo exhibitions at the gallery that have been harvested from almost 1,000 images produced over the course over two years of intensive studio experimentation.

Eaton's work will make your head spin, but only out of an appreciation of its involute complexity, and not because she has any intention to emulate what many still consider the alienating order of Op. That is clear from the chromatic choices she has made here. They are alluring and contemplative and not frenetic or hallucinogenic in their mien. Perhaps all the better to seduce the embodied eye.

Each photograph records a litany of physical manoeuvres in the studio. Each photograph is the result of dozens of exposures onto a single sheet of 4 x 5 film. Each is directed by a mathematical equation that necessarily remains somewhat mysterious. Eaton introduces painted 3d geometric objects between exposures. These objects are painted in multifarious



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monochromatic shades of grey and the chromatic “filling-in” of the object and its backdrop space are finessed through RGB filters used according to the unique equations of Eaton’s higher chromatic math.

Now that may sound dry and somewhat pedantic but the actual images are anything but. They are invigorating and even unsettling in their mien. They bring to mind the paintings of Albers and Frank Stella, and they yield all the sheer visual pleasure that Sol Lewitt once afforded this writer when his postcards with original drawings of strange geometries arrived in the mail. Similarly, Eaton’s works deconstruct geometry with brio and perceptual finesse like the most resonant of Necker cubes spontaneously reversing in spatial depth, and our ingress easily switches to egress, and vice versa, which makes the close examination of her work a pleurably tricky proposition.

The works are constructed such that each quadrant is inherently ambiguous and our visual system is preoccupied with imposing an order on the whole that reaches a threshold of hectic fruition. (The Necker cube is sometimes used as a sounding board for advanced computer models of the visual system to see whether they can arrive at consistent interpretations of the image as humans do.) The ‘easter egg’ in an Eaton is not obvious – as in a video game it may be a clue to the process, or may open up a secret level in the work we had not anticipated – but it is a glorious mystery of ‘impossible objects’ nonetheless.

As we stand on the threshold of her pigment prints, both large and small, they palpate our optics, stimulate the retina, and invite us inside. The quanta of imaginal space they open up is simply measureless. The serial variations ripple across the field of vision with serene insistence. Her iterative experiments are not about their own implicit structural logic or contrariety but about the ambiguity endemic to our visual perception of the world. They are hermeneutic catalysts for self-questioning.

And Eaton is a chromatic alchemist or fabulist of no small persuasion. In her current work and earlier series of works (aptly entitled *Transmutations*), Eaton demonstrated just how adept she is at identifying morphologies of colour. The phenomenal vivacity of chroma in this new *Iterations* body of work deserves comment. She understands colour at the same level as

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an advanced abstract painter like Joseph Marioni does. I mentioned the work of Hilda af Klimt in an earlier piece on this artist, and the analogy still holds, I think, in that the mandala-like grace we find in the work of both artists bears a close family resemblance. I might also mention an affinity with the work of Tauba Auerbach, the gifted contemporary visual artist whose work draws on math and physics and explores rotational symmetry and higher-dimensional space with similar dedication.

The works abjure the neat and the tidy, and that is part of their allure. The borders of nested cubes are sometimes subtly smudged, edges bumped, and there is shadow mischief all about. These deficiencies enrich and ennoble the work, and remind us that Eaton is several light years safely removed from the digital homeworld.

Playing favourites is always a dangerous game here, and the standouts are many. *cfaal 1062* (2018) and *cfaal 1037* (2018) are like portals on an inner infinity that ground you within their horizons, resonant and true.

Jessica Eaton is a searcher after the truth and her *Iterations* are really elucidations in that search undreamt of by Malebranche, and it is one that notably frees her viewers from old ways of thinking and seeing and being alive.