

**Zisis Bliatkas**

***Windows Through***

April 13 - April 16, 2023

One of the things that we love about crypto is that everybody knows that everyone is kind of full of shit. It's all smoke and mirrors, branding, facade, optics, view counts, followers, etc. And everyone knows it. Which is kind of refreshing, because outside of crypto, everyone is also kind of full of shit, but people pretend that isn't true. Not to conflate our affection for this type of shared fraudulent confluence with that of hustle culture, the rise and grinds, or the fake it until you make it, because that's not our thing. We just like honesty. Yes, there are inventive and inspiring projects. Yes, there is beautiful and thoughtful artwork. Yes, there are actually nice people. But no, there is not transparency or utopian visions or ethical consumption, yet.

Zisis Bliatkas is not full of shit. Nor is he "faking it" or "making it." Not that he won't make it, but for now, he is a proper emerging artist; talented, considerate, creative, and hardworking. While he is a painter with a capital P, having recently received his MFA from the Athens School of Fine Arts, he moonlights as a grubby NFT maker, using MS Paint to produce infinitely detailed (ok, not infinite, because a pixel is actually a pixel), ridiculously colorful works that are both the flattest thing one has ever seen while also being rich with depth. His two instagram accounts are a testament to the continued separation of church and state when it comes to the traditional art world and the crypto scene (I'll let you decide which one is the church and which is the state).

In *Windows Through*, Bliatkas has packed many of his signature motifs into the six presented artworks including his use of drop shadows, sharp corners, intense detail, scratchy squiggles, and dissonant colors. Fantastical structures like the one seen in *Daylight Warmth Collector* are a common occurrence in Bliatkas' work, both as a monument to dead technology and a playground for whatever creatures might be hiding off-frame. Secretive spaces, like the building floating in the ether in *Post Office*, offer an homage to the voidness of the web where half of our lives now exist. And on more than one occasion, it seems that Bliatkas has literally copied and pasted an entire artwork right on top of another (it seems this way because he did), creating a layering of flatness that pushes the boundaries of depth and lack of depth within an image.

One advantageous byproduct of working with digital paint is that the artworks are not precious objects. A simple CTRL+Z could undo even the most laborious bad decision. Over the course of planning this exhibition, Bliatkas worked and reworked each painting, creating multiple iterations and variants, combining and recombining. This offers him the ability to experiment and work in a playful manner in a way that acrylics does not.

And while many people bemoan the way that the internet has flattened everything; culture, relationships, attention spans, representation; it has obviously offered new ways of connecting with one another. The sophisticated flatness of Bliatkas' work is what drew us in over two years ago when it first appeared on our screen from across the Atlantic Ocean. We would argue that within this flatness there are layers upon layers of complex relations if one is willing to look for them.

**Zisis Bliatkas** (b. 1992) is a painter working with digital and traditional materials to explore ideas related to humans' relationship to technology, the vastness of space within and outside of the internet, and anemoia; the feeling of nostalgia for a past experience one has never known. Recent solo exhibitions include Rebecca Camhi Gallery (Athens, GR) and OKAY initiative space (Athens, GR). He received his MFA from the Athens School of Fine Arts in 2022. He lives and works in Naoussa, Greece.