



ARTS

“Rachel Stuckey: Good Days & Bad Days on the Internet” at Women & Their Work

The artist creates some genuinely geeky-cool stuff in this show that’s smart, funny, and fresh in its treatment of tech

REVIEWED BY MELANY JEAN, FRI., DEC. 15, 2017



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Bad Days & Good Days on the Internet



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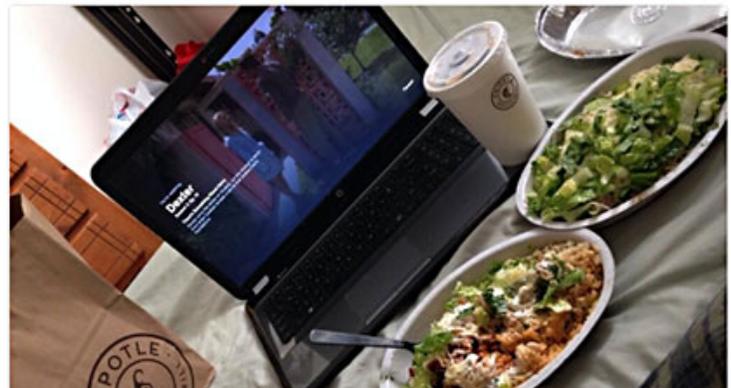


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WeavingDreams @baddaysgooddays · Nov 5

Got a new laptop and got chipotle #awesomeday



#baddaysgooddays, Twitter bot

"My senior year was awesome, had a baby, at the same time got a new macbook & Graduated." Thus spat out the Twitter bot @baddaysgooddays after I punched a button indicating I was having a Good Day. An interactive portion of Rachel Stuckey's Women & Their Work show "Good Days & Bad Days on the Internet," the auto-generated text is culled from posts related to technology and tagged #awesomeday, #ftw, #worstdayever, and #fml. It's a charming introduction to the show, akin to a seemingly innocuous initial check-in on social media – FB and your therapist want to know: "What's on your mind?" – that ushers a fall into an internet K-hole.

Light-blocking curtains section off most of the rest of the show, simulating the circadian disruption that comes with overexposure to exclusively artificial light. Once you're beyond the curtain, the space is dark save for a neon-pink glow and the light emanating from screens, of which there are plenty. A ghostly, pulsing female voice sings drone-y covers overhead, most notably a disorienting version of Creed's "With Arms Wide Open." The show is not without a sense of humor.

Stuckey has done some genuinely geeky-cool stuff here. Don't miss: a dumb terminal, a tiny 3-D-printed model of an early terminal computer that displays a grid animation; a wobulated GIF that will have you trying to pick out patterns as an old Samsung screen convulses and the accompanying soundtrack moves from music to noise and back; and, to quote the program, a "sensuous, undulating wave of textural video pixels with accompaniment from an avatar guardian."

In a separate area designed to approximate a 1980s office, a screen sits atop a desk playing a video performance. Stuckey has created a fictive promotional video for Disk 3, an artificial intelligence on a floppy disk from the clones at Fortuna 500. It's a vintage tongue-in-cheek treatment of tech bro archetypes, where, to quote the enthusiastic Ms. DOS, head of sales and customer service, "We're not just corporate drones, we're literally clones!" Other literal clones include a sleep-deprived and vocal-fried Cameron Howe-type programmer and an artificially sweet "personality writer," all played by Stuckey. The piece is hokey and affected, but intentionally and winningly so.

The most dominating piece is a giant projection of what is defined as "bitrot." A grotesque deterioration of pixels, the nearly 20-minute video shows a girl group's performance morphing into a horrifying prism of body parts. This shit is daze-y, at once entrancing and sinister. You could be rapt there interminably, a statement that holds true for many of Stuckey's installations and even more holes of the internet.

In a time where the last three words of "Good Days & Bad Days on the Internet" are perhaps redundant, the show manages to be smart, funny, and fresh in its treatment of tech, never too doomsday – it's clear Stuckey loves this stuff – but nonetheless interested in teasing out the development and nature of technology's sometimes-banal, sometimes-disturbing captivation. An update from the bot: "Have to watch my terrible cousins. They stole (and nearly broke) my ipad and are throwing my cat around like a stuffed animal." Sounds like a Bad Day. :(

"Rachel Stuckey: Good Days & Bad Days on the Internet"

Women & Their Work, 1710 Lavaca

www.womenandtheirwork.org

Through Jan. 11

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