

ARTNEWS

THE LEADING SOURCE OF ART COVERAGE SINCE 1902



Ryan McGinness, *Figure Drawing in Neon (Christy, Thea, and Zelina)*, 2014, argon and mercury in 8mm glass with electrical components, 60" x 60".

RYAN MCGINNESS

PACE PRINTS
MAY 3 - JUNE 14

Ryan McGinness loves women, but not to worry: his eros is platonic. Following Plato, McGinness demonstrated in these 19 splendid silk screens, porcelain-on-steel panels, etched stainless-steel, colored-glass, and neon constructions, that true art exists not in reproducing bodies but in transforming them—in this case, models named Christy, Thea, and Zelina—into abstractions.

McGinness is gently didactic, suggesting we must move beyond bodies to achieve art. This is a double lesson, moral and esthetic. Moral because bodies appeal to our erotic instincts; esthetic because representation is only copying, not creating. So in each of these brilliant exercises, there was the memory of a body, an idea that leads to geometric purity. Static images cannot depict this kind of movement, but McGinness brilliantly overcomes that obstacle by using neon. His *Figure Drawing in Neon (Christy, Thea, and Zelina)*, 2014, depicts progress as the viewer blinks from an anthropomorphic red Christy, to a more abstract blue Thea, to a totally abstract yellow Zelina. The neon sign of the dime-a-dance joint became in this context an explanation for why abstraction is a real alternative to representation.

Of particular importance were three reflective McGinness works from 2012. Here McGinness challenged us to look in his dark mirrors and transcend our narcissism.

ALFRED MAC ADAM