

*Annunciations* at M LeBlanc Chicago

June 23- August 24 2018

In Fra Angelico's version of the Annunciation that's painted in the convent of San Marco, the angel Gabriel and the virgin Mary are pictured facing one another in an open room with their arms folded in front of themselves. Read left to right, Gabriel communicates the supernatural status of Mary's pregnancy to her by pantomiming an expanding abdomen. Her repetition of the gesture illustrating her comprehension of the word as conception itself.

This mirroring of positions may also be read in reverse as an empathic response by Gabriel, doubled over. As Mary comprehends his message corporeally, slouching with her face drawn long as if colored by morning sickness, the sexless angel is also transfigured, terrestrially, gravity pulling its halo beneath hers.

Both figures are framed within the architectural space by a strange horizontal black line that turns inwards and into the space corralling them. The hollow arches in the ceiling above them echo the rounding womb. Within this enclosed and fractured space it becomes difficult to discern narrative priority. What's inscribed into who and who's inscribed into what between language, architecture, virgins, angels, and holy embryos is as ultimately perplexing as a set of Russian dolls that don't fit into one another or where each fits into every. The image is of subjecthood deformed by a haptic gaze. Through the measurement of the negative, the impressions left upon the individual by the forces of authority, we nominate the lack.

The film and videos in this exhibition share concerns of surveillance, projections of desire, and the scrutiny of institutional authorities but it was more through a sense of the work's tonalities that they were considered in relation to one another.

James Krone

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