

MIER

“Review: Eve Fowler imagines Gertrude Stein's words as a visual cacophony”

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By Sharon Mizota



Eve Fowler's "the difference is spreading," 2015, installation view at Mier Gallery. (Lee Thompson)

Gertrude Stein doesn't need Eve Fowler. The early 20th-century experimental writer is a touchstone of modernism. Yet Fowler brings Stein's legacy to new life in a thoroughly engaging exhibition at Mier Gallery.

The L.A. artist has worked with Stein's texts for the past five years, rendering them as unexpected advertising in brightly colored posters and billboards. Indeed, Stein's dense writing is easier to parse in koan-like snippets, such as "in the morning there is meaning" or "anyone telling anything is telling that thing."

The gallery is lined with new paintings, collages and a floor sculpture, each consisting of a Stein-ism set in a different typeface and color scheme. The multivalent texts come at you from all angles. Perhaps most affecting is "the difference is spreading." Rendered in black-on-black, it suggests change as a barely perceptible but inevitable seepage.

On the floor, a disk of dark wood bears the nonsensical but sexually suggestive phrase "rub her coke" in large gold letters. It gives an unexpected heft to the ambiguous yet blunt command, extending it off the wall, into our space.

A single line of text encircling the walls further enlivens the room. Interrupted by the paintings, it's impossible to read in a linear fashion. Instead of mastery, one is left with a mesh of language, a generative cacophony.

Mier Gallery, 1107 Greenacre Ave., (323) 498-5957, through Jul. 3. Closed Sundays and Mondays. www.miergallery.com