

Now Showing: The Coldest Winter, a summer group show

By Emily Steer
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Karel Funk, *Untitled #75*, 2015. Acrylic on panel 24 x 30 in.

Alright stop, collaborate and listen. San Francisco is known for its changeable climate, so it should come as no surprise that the city's Jessica Silverman Gallery have dedicated their summer group show to one of the coldest materials there is, ice.

Thick coats, large crunchy hoods and bags of ice sit about the space, from an impressive group of the gallery's artists which includes 2015 Turner Prize nominated artist Nicole Wermers – a signature vintage fur slung over the back of a steel framed chair in *Untitled Chair* – and Francis Alÿs – showing his late-90s looping video *Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing*, which depicts the artist pushing a hefty, though slowly disappearing lump of ice through the streets of Mexico City for over 9 hours.

These two pieces demonstrate well the play between harshness and protection that comes through in this selection of works. At times in the exhibition the human is sheltered from the elements through external layers – sunny coloured, or else warmly fur-lined – and at others the turquoise blue chill is almost palpable. Stereotypical imagery comes into play also, as in Chris Bradley's *Ice Bag* works, their polar-bear-on-ice logos suggestive of our collective simplification of the landscape of the poles, and also the imagery that dominates material about global warming. With all this ice at exactly the wrong time of year, unavoidable weather changes are an underlying factor.

SWIMMER (2016), a piece of writing by Mia Goyette, addresses these ideas head-on. What at first sounds like the description of a heated, romantic summer day on the beach ('If I could trust my body—the perspiration pooling behind my knees and in the little divot above my lip—I would come to the conclusion that the heat today is nearly unbearable') turns into a description of a world post-warming, with warnings of an irreversibly changed landscape; 'Now nothing moves, I believe even the sun stands still'.

'The Coldest Winter, a summer group show' is showing at Jessica Silverman Gallery South until 27 August