I had a phone interview for some fandom work but the guy hung up on me even though I was sure I could pee in his insult him. I don’t have enough experience or the right attitude.
The funny thing about jokes is that they’re often more than what they seem. There are idioms for this in most languages. In Spanish: *Entre broma y broma la verdad se asoma.* Which is a rough parallel to the English: *Many a true word is spoken in jest.* The jester, after all, was the only courtier able to say things as they were, precisely because he didn’t say them straight.

If jokes tilt our sense of control in the world, as Mary Douglas says, Caitlin Halloran’s tilt leans toward the shared self-consciousness of an inside joke. By embodying the intimacy of humor, Halloran creates a visual world that is as colorful and messy as our own hilarious lives in all their weird particulars. Those tiny moments of disjunction and erratic eroticism that we experience in our daily lives find voice in the subtle, material awkwardness of her work.

At the Courtyard Gallery, Halloran shows a new body of work, mostly textiles alongside recent and older drawings. The textiles have a distinctive material presence, which often plays against short texts Halloran has stitched onto them. On a velour banner, garish hot pink cartoon bubble letters spell out “The End” in a darkly hilarious contrast. On a set of sheer curtains, hand-sewn words awkwardly pull at the delicate fabric while telling off-color one-liners like a flat, stand-up comedian.

Halloran’s comic subversiveness also comes through in her pie chart drawings, which over time have slowly unraveled from elastic color wheels to loosely connected color swatches. By softening the objective rigidity of graphs, Halloran tilts us again toward the sensory and the personal. How and what exactly the charts measure is obscure to us, but we can feel what they’re doing. And that is another kind of communication, a feminist one, which transmits not through universal figures but through the felt, the intimate, and the particular.

*Allison Myers* is a PhD candidate in art history at The University of Texas at Austin, specializing in contemporary art and critical theory. In 2016–17 she served as the Visual Art Center’s Curatorial Fellow and is currently a Mellon Fellow at the Blanton Museum. Her dissertation examines how modernist cultural stereotypes influence the ways viewers see and engage with contemporary works of art, particularly in the reception of French art in the US during the 1970s.
February 15 – April 21
2018

RECEPTION
Thursday, February 15
5–7pm

Caitlin Halloran

Caitlin Halloran uses associative color and serious play to mimic objectivity and hysteria. At the Courtyard Gallery, her recent textiles and drawings poke at the intimacy of humor through material and textual jokes. Halloran received her BFA from The University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2014 and her MFA from The University of Texas at Austin in 2017. Her work has been shown at the Visual Arts Center (Austin), MASS Gallery (Austin), The Wurks (Providence, RI) and the Augusta Savage Gallery (Amherst, MA), among other venues. She lives and works in New York.

The Courtyard Gallery is located in the AT&T Hotel and Conference Center at The University of Texas at Austin and features artwork from alumni of the Department of Art and Art History in the College of Fine Arts.

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