

Jennings Kerr

Pulped

David Hamilton, Daniel Hollier, Ochre Lawson, James Lieutenant, Catrin Llwyd, Roman Longinnou

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Paper has been critical in dissemination; our stories and recorded histories but also our day-to-day, the family photos and important documents. We often forget it in favour of what it supports, and maybe now it has lost a little agency in the screen age. The great newspapers going digital, the kindle and the touch screen. Paper starting to resemble the status of the vinyl album, enjoyed for its romance and material quality and a strange thought while writing on screen to output to printer for laying on paper (and exporting to screen). It was born from cloth sheet around 200 BCE in China and immediately changed communication and the recording of information, before this it might have been clay tablet, barks, palm leaves, animal skins or various parchments. The processes vary, however the majority of pulping occurs through the use of plant based fibres and water to sheet a material through a screen. The pieces in this show all sit on paper but empathise the negative space, the material operating in the image making, contrast underlined. This emphasis occurs through the absence of colour in most if not all the work. The drawing and painting a balance of control and chaos, light touch and expressive marks, composed or wild, and in some cases both. This show ignores any notion of hierarchical material structures, there are no 'studies' in the room and the artists all approach material and medium with this in mind.

David Hamilton's paper is handled softly but the images are vast. The seascape suggests a filmic and theatrical underpinning, a whisper created in the elegant treatment of light in the sky, storms breaking out in the bay as the boats return for the evening. As always, Hamilton operating with confidence and efficiency, a delicate reduction. There is movement in the sky as the waves break. Like most of Hamilton's work, the bay is a classic scene that is open and allows the audience in. They welcome the viewer to fill them with their own activity and memory and like all of the work in this show they are as much about the marks not made. The watercolour and gouache pieces by Catrin Llwyd also hint at a narrative outside the frame, they feel romantic with their moon light and humble shelters at the edge of, and inside the woods. Llwyd is playful with her use of the medium, using it to quickly render something while walking or revisiting a memory from her childhood walking the woods in rural Wales. These night scenes are simple, the mood is set elegantly through a light touch. 'Snow under the Stars', 2023 is a perfect example of Llwyd's ability to play with light, to use the fluidity and translucency to represent the glowing sky. 'House in The Dark Forest', 2022 has a tree line made up of frenetic marks, a lone window of light, the blue underpainting allowed through to sign some after hours but what lurks beyond in the trees seems a little sinister or spooky. Ochre Lawson's winter trees are full of life, dynamic and free. They feel observed over a day or two and rendered with the energy of the tree in mind, its sway in the wind, the morning sun creeping up over it, the shadows cast out by it, and perhaps the movement of energy inside it. The drawing is loose but alive, poignant in this case with the subject and surface being bound through the process of paper making. A sort of poetic full circle that brings to mind the work *Future Library* by Scottish conceptual artist Katie Patterson. The piece involves the contribution of one hundred texts, one per year that will be printed onto paper taken from a forest of trees planted by the artist. The pieces of writing will lay dormant until 2114 when the one thousand trees will be felled and the texts printed. A beautiful work that speaks to the evolution of language, the sharing of stories, and our absorbing of material and resource. Trees as the treasures of life.

James Lieutenant walks a line between chaos and control. His field of mark making is a place that he can control in a way to reflect on things outside of his control. He is able to work in a way that allows error and chance into the field, a letting go and release in order to free up the marks and image the everyday. In his painting we have seen an array of techniques that look to intertwine photography and painting, representations and the abstract, as well as surfaces that are incredibly reactive. These pieces feel more about trace and artefact from the perspective of the incidental mark and in their language they almost feel like a nod to his art school experiments on photocopier. Jams, ink bleeds, paper alignment, low toner, dusty scratched scanner bed, positive and negative image and bumping the contrast. All the affects to control and to not, here the monotype is a balance of measured gesture and chance. The perspex is inked, smudged, marked, scratched and pressure applied to his paper. Lifted and exposed, a reversed and unique state. There is an immediacy that Lieutenant enjoys, and a result that once again seems to sign both the photographic and the painted mark. Here is a perfect example of light and contrast, printing an image onto a material and the success here is in its uncertainty. The marks feel weightless and free, the surfaces washed and faded. They express a patina of sun drenching, faded and raw. They feel like a crop of a great punk poster, maybe a snippet left by the side of the photocopier or the cover of a DIY zine. The raw and incidental is an important contrast the mastery of charcoal in the work of Roman Longinnou or the delicate control in the Hamilton watercolours.

Roman Longinnou makes exquisite drawing and in many cases he borrows from the traditions and associations of vanitas painting. The works play on connotations of cloth, its drape and quality, its ability to conceal and in many cases how it is used to mask as well as operate as a second skin in creating persona and status. The work 'Smoke'. 2023 renders the shirt as smoke, pulled apart, billowing up and out into space. The suggestion as always is that there must be fire, perhaps a danger in falsely idolising, placing our faith in the materialistic. Longinnou is able create theatricality and grandeur in his staging and treatment of image and material. A chaotic and mesmerising scene that speaks to the ephemeral. Daniel Hollier applies his ink and acrylic as a meditation. The following of form and filling of space seems to be as intuitive as one could achieve. The success is felt in the flow of the line, the movement of hand glides and the contact is confident. Where we have seen the gestures jump from one part to another, crossing a seam in the substrate, here we have a different form of interference. The overlaying of the idea with another iteration of it. Hollier dancing with the pasted street poster, the next weeks news and the direct overlay. It is somehow what brings the work alive, elevates it to a new status and echoes the street scene that inspired it. The torn edge against the clean cut is another little reminder of Hollier's ability to nuance his surfaces and materials, to lift things from the studio and reinvent, but most importantly in my opinion, he is able differentiate between a work on paper and something more. Maybe it's a work with paper, or a paperwork but there is a subtle difference. It lies in how the material substrate expresses something new and that which would not be achieved without. This piece an

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example of intuition, expressive mark as meditation but the handling of paper and the raw energy sit it somewhere in the middle of the spectrum. A calm in the chaos.

This show like its companion next door, sits in material and how we relate to it. What does it bring to our lives and how are we enriched by it. The light and the dark in the world around and how we tell our tales and record them for the future generations. The great black and white photos of Daido Moriyama or the age of silent cinema endure the test of time through quality, the static hum of the vinyl record, or the notion of analogue in general will continue to shine and bring light despite the AI infused eyewear or the chatGPT verse. Things of quality endure, they stay with us and continue to aid in our story telling and our understanding of the world, its histories and how we look to its future.

James Kerr, 2023