



MARK TITMARSH JUSTIN TRENDALL

Marrickville Garage
Jane Polkinghorne & Sarah Newall (Directors)
28 Leofrene Ave,
Marrickville, NSW 2204

Friday 30 May to Saturday 07 June 2014

MARRICKVILLE
GARAGE

Gallery hours:
Friday 30 May, 6 - 8 pm
Saturday 31 May, 11 - 5pm
Sunday 1 June, 11 - 5pm
Saturday 7 June, 1 - 5 pm

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Justin Trendall is represented by Sarah Cottier
Gallery and works as a lecturer at Sydney College
of the Arts, The University of Sydney.

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TRUECOLOUR



HUNDREDS & THOUSANDS

Over the past seven years we have worked together on a series of experimental shows. 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking' in 2007 at SNO, 'Nothing Changes, Changes Everything' in 2008 at the UTS Gallery and 'Painting and Time' in 2011 at ICAN. It's been an informal collaboration growing out of a shared interest in the writings of the philosopher Martin Heidegger. The shows have explored connections between our practices, generating a conversation carried out through the production of artworks. It is an experimental dialogue that has been both casual and sustained.

This particular show brings together two projects that have been developed in the privacy of our studios over the past few years. Both bodies of work experimentally combine images and colour in orderly but slightly arbitrary ways. They are simultaneously serial and surreal. Mark's work uses book covers as a base, while Justin uses photographs of a specific set of industrial buildings

Both sets of images have been systematically embellished with minimal colour interventions. In Mark's it is coloured paint or clippings, in Justin's it is lengths of cotton embroidery.

One reading of these would be to see them as decorative enhancements that have somehow disturbed the graphic stability or quietness of the completed cultural artefact. This disturbance like a slip of the tongue or return of a forgotten memory invokes the historical connection between collage and dreams. But it is only tentative, a formal indication since the work is too systematic, too orderly, to be considered surrealist. In the European Avant-Garde collage comes before Surrealism, it is the ground on which Surrealism rests, it is the precondition

to any rupture in the fabric of the real. In this work, as in Surrealism, different orders of imagery are carefully brought together in a series of small collisions produced under laboratory conditions. Commonality is established through that which separates, that which cuts and penetrates the surface of the image thereby releasing a pent up visual remainder. The sewing machine delivers colour by perforating and rebinding the surface just as scissors and glue rip apart and suture together.

There is something typically surrealist here in the subversion of authority that comes through collecting and assembling sets of images against the grain of their original intention. If the other element of the work, serialism, is a subset of mathematical set theory, then Surrealism brings quantum duality or Heisenberg uncertainty into the equation.

Seriality is established through visual structure and in particular the presence of colour. While colour is often taken as the least offensive subject in a personal conversation, (what is your favourite colour?), there is a peculiarly hidden politics of colour behind everything we look at. From David Bachelor's notion of chromophilia to Ranciere's regime of aesthetic sensibility, colour delivers an audience for a demographic cause. Colour can be the inspiration for revolutionary fervour, narcotic world loss, or the precursor to murderous love. In returning to colour at the end of monochromatic analytic cubism, Picasso and Braque slashed the understanding of what painting could be with traces of foreign matter, particularly excerpts from the daily Parisian newspaper "Le Jour". With a slice of the knife 'jour' was reduced to 'jou', the French word for play. From that point on, like the final scene of Tarkovsky's 'Andrei Roublev', colour came out of hiding to become dominant in Cubism, leading up to Rococo Cubism. This final stage of cubism, a kind of colourist mannerism,

PARVIZ TANAVOLI

undiscovered minimalism

gelims from northern iran



featured clippings from newspapers, patterned wallpaper and an array of stinging colours rarely seen in the Parisian avant-garde. Because of the glare of colour it took a while to notice the radical intrusion into the discipline of painting that scissors and glue had made. Collage then became the formal engine of Dada, Surrealism and photomontage producing radical third terms from the combination of any two ordinary items from the everyday world.

In Mark's work one of those ordinary items is the book cover or dust jacket. Painting and books have related to each other since the first illuminated manuscripts. Painting was to some extent born from the structure of the book, its quadratic orientation with vellum stitching and hand drawn text applied by sable hair or ceramic stylus.

By cutting into the graphic surface of the dust jacket, collage releases some background energy. Some of it historical, like the links between the word and the illumination of vision, some of it contemporary, like the digital magnetic force in some images that are easily exported, tending to snap together at their perfect edges.

In Justin's work the imagery is based around a series of photographs of industrial buildings. These have been taken over an extended period of time and then arranged into series, their simple composition and typological ordering giving them a documentary feel. They draw upon a long standing genre of non-art photography: pictures of large scale industrial infrastructure, sky scrapers, factories, silos, airports, bridges and docks, dead pan images with reductively simple compositions and seemingly unproblematic approach to image making.

This imagery is recalibrated so as to open up a space within the genre for other meanings; getting beyond the 'matter of fact' approach adopted by

these vernacular portraits of industrial structures. Intervention takes the form of embroidery, with stitching shifting attention away from the photographic process, turning images into objects. The embroidering sets up a tension between functionality and decoration; technological efficiency and culture; industrial production and human dreaming. It is through the embroidery that colour enters into the conversation, bringing with it all of the complications of aesthetics, taste and intuition.

In a world of infinite digital collage, cutting and pasting tends to disappear into the background, almost taken for granted. So in this show, even though the collage work is 'hard copy', it requires close inspection to find the point at which a cut or transition has been made. Collage has become a whisper rather than a weapon, revealed only in a set of subtle shifts in colour, a visual dialect hiding in the visual glare of everyday obviousness.

Mark Titmarsh and Justin Trendall
May 2014

Image credits

Left: Mark Titmarsh
Undiscovered Minimalism, 2013
Paper collage, 60 x 31 cm

Front cover: Justin Trendall
A House for Julia Gillard and Jean-Luc
Godard, 2013
Archival digital print & cotton, 32 x 46 cm

Back Cover Above: Mark Titmarsh
Detail of Van, 2013
Paper collage, 29 x 24 cm

Back Cover Below: Justin Trendall
Hunger, 2014
Archival digital print and cotton
18 x 27 cm