

Alexander Jackson Wyatt
Wind whistles, Time blows

22.10. - 27.10. 2020
Raum 7.05

new jörg - Parallel 2020
www.newjoerg.at
info@newjoerg.at

Time blows, Wind whistles

"To imagine a language is to imagine a form of life."
(Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*)

"Words are uttered, but fail to enlighten."
(Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*)

The best way to approach Alexander Jackson Wyatt's work might be to stumble into the exhibition space. When I first saw an exhibition of his in 2019, there was something about his works, and the relationships between them, that had me tripping over them, metaphorically speaking, producing a feeling of falling into the virtual space that they span between them. One year later, in Jackson Wyatt's exhibition for New Jörg at PARALLEL VIENNA, the effect remains the same. While I fail to have an immediate grasp on them, I feel a strange attraction toward these mysterious objects, a kind of gravitational pull that keeps my mind whirling around in their orbits.

One of the reasons for this feeling of vertigo appears to lie in the idiosyncratic status of the photographic elements in his works. The images used by Jackson Wyatt in *Express Interior* and *Dead Plants Refrain* stem from his personal archives. They are always photos he has taken himself, of objects he encountered somewhere in the real world. All additional information surrounding the photographed objects is removed. All the visual cues that give away hints at the social function of the objects, their meaning, are cut away. In a way, they even look strangely unreal, for almost everything that makes up what Roland Barthes called the "reality effect" in literature—all the little, seemingly redundant, descriptive details that present a surplus not needed for understanding the basic content of a situation or the trajectory of a narrative—all this is taken away as well, leaving only a very concrete, but scarcely specified object. On top of this operation of removing visual cues, the images are distorted in physical space. The pictorial object partakes in the softness of its material support, the Plexiglass, on which the pigment prints on latex are adhered. When the Plexiglass bends in 3D space, the flat images bend with it, in their distortion somewhat reminiscent of digitally manipulated images. The "virtualized" object becomes harder to recognise, harder to describe, alien to our usual practices of perceiving and interpreting the object world around us.

Jackson Wyatt compares the resulting difficulty to recognise and interpret the isolated images or objects in his works to the neurological phenomenon of "aphasia"—the inability to comprehend or formulate language because of damage to specific brain regions. Receptive aphasia may also affect visual language such as sign language. In contrast, the use of formulaic expressions in everyday communication is often preserved. In a series of paintings that Jackson Wyatt exhibits for the first time, he uses idiomatic expressions, again isolated from any pictorial or narrative context. Like the photographs, he draws these expressions from a personal archive, in this case a list he has been keeping for a while. The roughly painted words hover somewhere between the picture plane and their new context of the exhibition, like subtitles without a film, in search of a situation to attach themselves to.

In other works—like the series of untitled objects that are populating the exhibition space at PARALLEL VIENNA like groups of mushrooms—Jackson Wyatt uses another method to take a form he encountered out of its conventional context and transform it. The trapezoid shape of these objects is borrowed from the lateral leg components of Austrian designer Franz Schuster's *Forum Stadtpark* chairs. By isolating the traced silhouette and adding different materials and colours, Jackson Wyatt creates hybrids between aesthetic objects in their own right and multifunctional tools he can use in display situations. As part of spatial installations, both material and colour carry out specific functions in structuring the space. While a material like cork is "porous, absorbs sound, is used as an insulation material, is sensitive to sunlight," Jackson Wyatt explains, strong colours "reflect light and cut through space."

The structural openness of the single components of *Wind Whistles, Time Blows* is produced by isolating images, objects, shapes, and words, thus stripping them of their context. Relieved from their function as signifiers (among other functions) Jackson Wyatt's works unfold a heightened connectivity, always inherently adjusting to the spatial setting in which they are presented. Entering into dynamic relationships without the possibility of the activity of reception abruptly ending through an act of interpretation or recognition, they confront the spectators with their dynamics of his own modes of perception. Without the slightest hint of being didactical, Alexander Jackson Wyatt's installations give us the opportunity to re-create the rush and excitement of really seeing "mere things" for the very first time.

Michael Wonnert-Magnusson