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SLIGHTLY UNCANNY

Strange, detailed and approximate, three words that tend to summarize the work of Kyle Beal, Patrick Lundeen and Stacy Lundeen in *Slightly Uncanny*. *Slightly*; being employed because the work doesn't fully adhere to the Freudian concept of the Uncanny; a concept which refers to a feeling of unease caused by a seeming disappearance of rational and reassuring explanations to phenomena occurring in everyday life. The work of the three artists is only *slightly* uncanny; because it hovers on the borders of logic and irrationality, slightly; because it commits to neither wholly.

In the mind of Patrick Lundeen, where dreams and cinematographic experiences are blurred and usurp their respective definition and place, images that resemble ones found in popular culture emerge and are then materialized through the artist's brush. Here, the brush limits the artist to a self inflicted painstaking process of making minute marks on monumental canvases, creating images that without irony or euphoria remind us of the ubiquity of popular images in everyday life and the inevitability of their daily sighting. In *Spiderman #1*, a pointillist-like application of paint culminates in the creation of a giant heroic icon with hypnotic eyes. In Lundeen's short film *Sin Will Find You Out*, the sun sets on New York leaving space for fleeting apparitions that evoke sin and the desire for flesh, neon lights outline shadowy forms, leaving the spectator in the dark. A hand digs around in the dirt to discover a pornographic magazine, a Spiderman mask hidden inside. A flashlight then tracks Spiderman in his erratic nocturnal escapade throughout the city revealing a guilt punctuated by the stroke of midnight ringing from church bells. This virtuous hero from comic strips is tracked and caught red handed in his strange and silent manoeuvres, the purpose of which are concealed behind an impenetrable mask. The impression of a certain gap emanates from Lundeen's oeuvre. A gap between the image presented by the artist and that to which it corresponds in the viewers own imagination. Indeed, the image of a derelict Spiderman, acting the lead role in a dark and lewd film has nothing but a mask in common with the brave hero presented in popular films and comic strips. This gap found in this formally uncanny and eerie film, projects an aftertaste of imposture and identity usurpation on the figure of Spiderman thus sowing doubt about the authenticity of observed reality.

The ambiguous work of Kyle Beal follows a track similar to that of the troubling uncertainty elicited by the work of Patrick Lundeen. Pulling his inspiration from contemporary existence and the artist's studio, Beal creates a clean slate approach to the logical and consensual rationalisations present in our society, throwing common sense into question. Leaving little out, Beal focuses on subjects as diverse and harmless as Freudian slips and the overheard conversations of strangers. In addition to resorting to modest materials such as paper and to ostentatious ones such as gold, Kyle Beal resorts to the potency of text as material in his work. In *Don't Think Twice on Second Thought*, the artist makes use of a phrase to effect a short-circuiting of rational thinking while validating the foundations of Cartesian thought. In his proclamation: 'I think therefore I am' the French philosopher René Descartes consecrated the act of doubt as the ultimate proof of existence. In realising works that invite doubt and reflection, Kyle Beal brings to light the existence of the spectator, evidence made even more obvious in the reflective surface of the glass used in his work. The raw materials used by Beal assume an undeniable importance. *Don't*

Think Twice on Second Thought puts a precious material into the service of a voluntarily approximate statement that crudely questions rational thinking. This is a departure from the delicate use of gold in statues and monuments where it once served to convey and celebrate lofty and consensual values and realities. The diversion of material and evidence of the viewer's presence are also found in *Nervous Hedonist*, a skeletal form made of flowers. Its serene appearance owes a lot to the plastic flowers of its making; indeed one often associates a skeleton with the decay of flesh; however the flowers used by Beal seem to operate as an antidote to this unease. In *Nervous Hedonist*, Beal creates a work of delightful shock, the "system" vibrating in nervous twitches every ten minutes, startles the viewer, bringing to light his/her existence once again. Armed with an oeuvre that is voluntarily approximate and bold in its content, Kyle Beal plants doubt leaving the mind wide open to question common consensus.

Stacy Lundeen, like Patrick Lundeen works large; as he pulls the subject of his work from the enormous circle of consumption. His photographs place quotidian objects and household items in centre stage. These omnipresent items that scatter the visual landscape of our contemporary existence are seen diverted from their utilitarian trajectory. With this diversion comes the desire to divest these objects with a strong emotional potential, allowing them to incite reaction from an audience unaccustomed to their possibility for such imposing presence. In the dramatic and garish lighting that Lundeen dresses his objects; the artist brings to light the allegorical and metaphorical significations of these objects relative to society, morality, sexuality and dualistic philosophy. Through the expression of these universal themes, Lundeen claims to indulge in portraiture by tracing the invisible contours of his own personality. In *Red and Blue Hand*, two primary colours share the task of lighting the outreaching hand of a statue that seems to mimic the gesture of benediction. Blue and red are symbols of opposing political forces; they are seen globally as the chromatic emblems for ideologies and doctrines. In *Blue and Red Hand* the two garish colours seem to compete over the right to light an object endowed with a strong religious connotation. This outstretched hand is clothed with an aura of authority and confident domination. It seems the artist is attempting to knight these common objects into material nobility, by bringing to the foreground their underlying magnificence. The Photographic work of Stacy Lundeen, with its multiple social and political connotations concurs with the artist's stated objective of sharpening audience subjectivity, by inviting the viewer to look at his work through the prism of their own perception of social and political realities.

At once allegoric portraiture and converging point for diverse subjective interpretations, the work of Stacy Lundeen offers itself to the public by presenting a re-contextualisation of the monuments of everyday life. Stacy Lundeen's work thus joins that of Kyle Beal and Patrick Lundeen in shedding an uncanny and oblique light on the objects taken for granted and the notion of everyday existence-

-Lotfi Gouigah