

DIAZ CONTEMPORARY

DISTILLING

BLIND WHITE brings together six national and international artists: Jen Aitken, Abbas Akhavan, Aude Pariset, Nicolas Sassoon, Rachele Sawatsky and Mark Soo. The selected artists were sent two texts written by the co-curators that they were invited to respond to. The provided texts stemmed from conversations between the curators on the interrelation of phenomenology and light, or alternatively, the relationship of consciousness to the experience of light and time. In turn, each artist responded to these thematics in a differing manner: with existing bodies of work; works made in response to the texts; or site-specific projects. As a mode of working and collaborating, an invitational model left open the possibility for agreement, conversation and conflict amongst the exhibited works and the positions that they articulate.

Placed in symbiotic or parasitic relationship to the existing architecture, Jen Aitken's site-specific sculptures quietly infringe on the gallery's interior. The paper-based works *Temporary Structure 5* and *Temporary Structure 6*, are at first easy to miss. However, once apparent, the site-specific constructions extending from existing clerestory windows, ceiling beams and fluorescent lights develop a gestural language composed of paper and tape. Over the duration of the exhibition, these constructions will shift as the paper eventually becomes affected by light and moisture. As a further response to the architectural features of the gallery, Aitken's *Untitled Block 1* and *Untitled Block 2* emerge as in/visible structures. Constructed of concrete, a consistent material in Aitken's practice, the sculptures are modeled according to existing cinder blocks, drawing emphasis to the malleable use-value of concrete as both artistic and construction material.

Similarly subtle at first are Abbas Akhavan's drawings *15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20*, that suggest a relationship to a specific ecology, a sentiment akin to much of his installation-based practice. Each drawing marks a specific correlation between the terra skin stone paper and the ink that is applied to it. In process, the paper is placed on a forty-five degree platform, after which the ink is applied and moved with a brush aided by gravity. The grid or grate-like images are both familiar and ambiguous in form and process, as images that resemble reconfigured commonplace objects, and a drawing process that resembles photographic prints. The longevity of this series of drawings for Akhavan has remained contingent on the reaction between this specific paper and ink, and with the discontinuation of the stone paper, these are the final six drawings. As a collection, the drawings oscillate between a depiction of ordinary structural elements, shifted from their manufactured exactness, towards an organic looseness.

Rachele Sawatsky's *Optimization* and *Daylight Recordings (for Marlow Moss)* are likewise ambiguous in their allocation as slide projector paintings. Each carousel is composed of 80 modified slides that document provisional paintings from Sawatsky's studio. In *Daylight Recordings (for Marlow Moss)* Sawatsky examines the eccentric peculiarity of Marlow Moss's (a contemporary of Piet Mondrian) desire for a light flooded south-facing studio. Photographed during various daylights, the visibility of each painting correlates to a time of day. As a further investigation into the relationship between light and the conditions of studio production and documentation, two ceramic works, both entitled *Untitled*, operate as the removed white spaces, or voids, in the

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slide projections. The materiality of the ceramic works are initially elusive, but closer examination of the *De Stijl*-referent forms reveals a textured ceramic painted with a highly saturated watercolour. Such formal and conceptual dualities are consistent across Sawatsky's various works, alluding to a shifting understanding of material consensus and the softening of time.

Electric Drip stems from Nicolas Sassoon's ongoing project *Patterns* that focuses on digital moirés. For Sassoon, each video animation begins with a pattern or form, from which he uses a process similar to building a web-based animation to create site-specific installations. *Electric Drip* references a liquid dropping and pulsating on a vibrating surface. The gradual motion of the pixelated animations relies on a quotient of familiarity with white noise and comfort with digitally produced light. Using a digital or internet based-aesthetic, Sassoon simulates an organic drip to create a projection that is mirrored on two facing walls. Utilizing a tunnel-based structure between two circular vortexes, it is significant to note that the projections can only be viewed independently while being understood as being connected.

Building on a correlation between optics and technology, Mark Soo's images from his *Figures, Grounds* series focus on the relationship between photography and abstraction. Each inkjet print is the result of a 35mm negative, enlarged until each pixel is visible. As a result, optimal viewing for the work is from a distance. The more distance between the work and the viewer, the more coherent the image. Placed at differing heights, Soo actively requires his audience to be responsible for negotiating their own physical, and in turn conscious or cognitive, relationship to the images of anonymous people—shifting their interpretations of the work between figurative or abstract and back again. Metaphorically, Soo employs light as a tool to pull images apart, asking the viewer to piece them back together at their own discretion.

Perhaps most direct in her use of representational forms, Aude Pariset's banners deal explicitly with the visual fetishization of technology consumerism, using images from the internet. Sourcing advertising images of technology in the process of becoming obsolete, Pariset splices the images into banners and "sublimates" them with organic matter. In *Planned Fall_I know my desire 1, 2 & 3* and *Planned Fall_Touch.Fall in love 1 & 2*, Pariset responds to the normalization of a desirable and disposable technological economy with the most rudimentary of substances. The juxtaposition of these two elements is, at once, both seductive and repulsive as a mirror for interior desire that is both necessary and yet unsustainable. Pariset figuratively documents the passing of time by marking shifting trends of gluttony—as economies of excess and waste—from sustenance to luxury goods.

It has been suggested that a gradual loss of vision is what inspired Jorge Luis Borges' incredibly visceral, fictitious world. In a similar vein, each work in BLIND WHITE inspires an alembic relationship to the subjective experience of time and what it means to be consciously present—acknowledging loss while attentively articulating the persistence of what might remain.

-Yasmin Nurmig-Por