

Please note:

1. Sky lanterns are not suitable for use by persons under 18 years of age.
2. Do not modify or alter the sky lantern or the fuel cell from its original state.

DIACLAIMER

All sky lanterns sold are to be used responsibly by adults only. We do not take any responsibility for damage caused to you, other people and animals or anyone's houses or property when you set the lanterns off. You are solely responsible.

If they are used in the right conditions, the sky lanterns are totally safe to use.

1 Patrick Coyle, *DIACLAIMER*, 14.5x21cm, spellcheck stamp on sky lantern instructions, 2010. Photo: JL Murtaugh. Courtesy: Tenderpixel

The Bottom Line

Tenderpixel, London

13 January – 3 February

"Less is more," states the press release accompanying "The Bottom Line": "It's about being to the point, dwindling something down to its essence". The notion of a bottom line reflects today's climate of austerity; of receding budgets and uncertain futures across public and private sectors. This term hints at last resorts and harsh realisations being delivered in a frank tone. With this in mind, it is interesting to consider what an 'essential' and 'fundamental' art work might be; what the core or basis for artistic production is.

Tenderpixel is an apt gallery for a succinct exhibition; one small, white room with a large window leading out onto London's antiquarian shopping lane, Cecil Court. Situated in the window, Jang-Oh Hong's installation capitalises on the gallery's ambiguous context. Two lights on black stands are decorated in fake flowers. The cool glare of RGB diodes falls on passing shoppers as a dismembered coat hangs from the ceiling. On first glance the clothing and lights act as window dressing for a trendy boutique, homogenous with the Covent Garden context. Through posing as commercial window display, *I Will Show Me* is invisible in its presence. Once a viewer recognises the true function of the space the installation begins to reveal these strategies of display; illuminating the rituals of spectacle and desire performed in the role of viewer/consumer.

The rest of the exhibition is hung in a predictable and understated way. Wall-mounted and equidistant, works call to be examined one by one. Situated on the gallery's back wall, Richard Ansett's large Lambda print is an ambiguous document. *Image_06_083 2010* is a portrait that is insolently provocative yet darkly reserved. A middle-aged man in a grey suit yawns as his half-shut eyes carelessly engage the camera/viewer. There is a tension between the staged and the accidental, the momentary and perpetual. Is the subject of the portrait (whose attire references the aesthetic of bureaucracy) telling us he's bored? And if so, with what: His life, art, us? As an image Ansett's work is disarmingly simple and eloquently realised.

In stark contrast to Ansett's sharp framing, Patrick Coyle presents a scattering of detritus. A few labels and leaflets are pinned to the wall above a propped up board of tile samples. Each found object contains a spelling mistake highlighted in red by Coyle and his bespoke 'spell-check stamp' (which appropriates Microsoft Word's zigzag underscore). Again, there is a tension between the virtuous and the pedestrian; with selected typos ranging from ironically poetic to dull. A humorous example of one of Coyle's found mistakes is *Diaclaimer*, the printed instructions for a sky lantern. Through being obviously erroneous the disclaimer in this text performs its own disclamation. The instructions state that the sky lantern was produced in China, which lead me to think about (the English) language in relation to globalisation, manufacturing and economics. Another fitting mistake was contained in the colophon of a book called 'Just my Type: a book about fonts', surely the last place you would expect to find a typo. Although I found

the proposition of this work charming, the five stamped examples on show seemed insufficient in some way. Perhaps Coyle's performative gesture and absurd methodology (which is administrative, analogue and anal) could be better communicated in relation to the specimens' display.

JL Murtaugh's work is more difficult to navigate. He presents us with two works: *Ref. no. 11/xxxxx/FULL2011* and *Wadha* (written in Arabic). The former is a geometric, red wall painting with white vinyl lettering and nylon wire. The piece looks diagrammatic; resembling the net of a polygon and adopting the aesthetic of high-end contemporary retail. The latter consists of two digital prints, each hung with eight bull dog clips. They depict sites in Abu Dhabi; a beach (on which the artist stands in a suit) and the entrance to a mosque (in which a cleaner walks with a mop). Both works are ludic in the way they contain but block information and, like the other works in the exhibition, relate to a dry bureaucratic world in which (here it seems) today's artists must operate. Murtaugh's propositions seem cold, convoluted and therefore unengaging. The works appear as visual jargon and I could not decide upon the artist's position or intention; was this irony, parody, criticism, optimism or something else? In direct contradiction to the claims stated in the press release, Murtaugh's works do not invoke the 'fundamental' and instead operate on the level of the 'auxiliary'; acting as index, supplement or support for conceptual statements that are difficult to decipher.

Irene Perez Hernandez' piece *Loop Series 2* functions differently. Two metal loops the scale of Scaletrix tracks are twisted into haphazard infinity symbols. The purity of the sign falters at the efforts of the artist's hands; continuity stutters against the structure's kinks and buckles. Executed in a different tone to the other works, this (for me) best encapsulates what a fundamental and essential art work might be; minus pretention yet not without humour. In this work the fundamental may be considered in terms of the relationships between: an artist and the material (s)he works with; the will to produce and the finished object; and definitions of success and failure within art practice.

As a whole, the exhibition contains varied and interesting work but struggles under the claims laid out for it in the accompanying press release. Although the definition of 'The Bottom Line' is not discussed in the curatorial statement, perhaps this title also refers to the phrase's informal use in business for net income (due to its location at the bottom of companies' income statements). This idea of all activity and exchange being reduced to a single expression of profit or loss is cynical; especially when applied to making and showing art. Perhaps the artists' references to infinity, inefficiency and boredom take place against this background of financial necessity, where the dream of being an artist boils down to the same economic reality experienced by everyone else.

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