

After Image

Curated by ARTUNER

February 28 - April 15, 2017

Opening Reception: Tuesday, February 28, 6-8 PM

Cassina Projects is pleased to announce *After Image*, a new exhibition curated by ARTUNER opening on February 28th, 2017. This exhibition presents two artists whose work moves between the physical and digital: **Toby Ziegler** and **Paul Kneale**.

Stare into the maxed-out brightness of your smartphone, tablet, or monitor and hold your gaze there. Notice how its immediate surroundings become darker. Now turn away and close your eyes; an optical echo of the screen will remain. This technically termed *afterimage* is a perceptual slippage that arises from the residual activity of the nerve cells situated in the back of the eye, retaining light even after its source is gone.

Taken literally however, the idiom *After Image* could also suggest the way in which the historical medium of images – painting – is today blended into a flattened and universal space, replicated, altered and spread across systems and devices. This exhibition presents two artists whose work moves between these two poles of *After Image/afterimage*, the physical and the digital. Both employ strategies that challenge the reading of a transmitted image's symbolic detritus, while also disrupting the basic reality claims of reproductive technology's lenses, sensors, chips and screens. While their approaches are drastically different, they share a concern for how to critically continue the discourse of painting, embracing the revolutionary technological capabilities that have decisively altered the public reception of the medium.

Toby Ziegler's work looks at the digital domain but focuses more specifically on its semiotic interplay. The images Ziegler [re]produces have a specific symbolic resonance as they use canonical paintings as points of departure. Works included in *After Image* appropriate Henri Matisse's 'La Danse' and 'Large Reclining Nude', lifting the pictures from Google and layering them onto aluminum panels. Viewed through the iconic Google search format, multiple versions of the Matisse image appear in a grid and are worked into and abstracted through the hand of the artist – through both repainting and the use of a rotary sander – altering our understanding of the subject's symbolism but also encouraging an understanding of the transformative capabilities that the invisible hand of Google has to offer. The archive is sabotaged and, like the work of Paul Kneale, re-imagined through both a computational and manual vernacular. In doing so, Ziegler oscillates between traditional/classical compositions and digital mystification. Paintings that are integral to our visual psyche are re-imagined as afterimages, staying with us but only through the haze of digital normalization.

Accompanying Ziegler's paintings is a two-channel video, displayed on two large LED screens, one mounted on top of the other. The top panel displays a sequence of 12 images of Matisse's 'La Danse' in which the hue has been systematically modulated through the spectrum. The 12 images of the painting have been pasted into an online 'similar image search' and each one renders dramatically different results. As the colors of the Matisse masterpiece depicted on the upper screen shift, the screen below displays the corresponding grid of visually similar images showing a plethora of rapidly oscillating subjects ranging from close-up photos of bloody, marbled beef, to luminous green surveillance images from night-vision cameras, and everything in between. Like the layering and eroding of paint on Ziegler's aluminum panels which makes a clear reading of the original image difficult, this sped up and constantly shifting repository obfuscates a direct understanding of the originally searched image while highlighting the transformative, instantaneous and deconstructive capacity of reverse image searching and the symbolic implications of digital cross-referencing.

Beginning with nothing on the scanner bed, **Paul Kneale** scans and rescans the changing light and atmosphere in the studio using multiple different models of consumer grade scanners like brushes. This process generates rich and intricate images, whose final compositions are output onto large-format canvases. For Kneale, the scanner machine itself is considered a material as well as an image-making device – its cheap Chinese construction houses a high tech image sensor that communicates with a set of acidic, over-saturated colors in its ink set. For the artist this crossroads of disposability and high technology is representative of a global moment, and the colors, textures and image dispositions that are wrought from it become its liminal representations. Working with these lowest grade scanners, the artist is able to make visible the nature of their vision. Often combining multiple 3000 DPI long exposure scans into 'visual time sandwiches' he forces them into processing errors, which may result in unpredictable fragments or wild colors – something he describes as 'what it feels like for a scanner to have an aneurism'.

For Kneale, this process is a continuation of the central historical concerns of painting — the representation of human experiences of vision on a surface. However, as Ziegler’s work also indicates, today our vision is often augmented by digital apparatuses, so Kneale opens up the mechanics of this process at its most basic level. A critical discussion of which he has expanded upon in a recent essay for Spike Magazine titled ‘Image Ageless’. While the initial phases of the work include a great degree of chance, as the process progresses the artist gains control and begins to carefully compose an image. The emerging surface exhibits formal qualities that are both direct and incidental indexes of the productive stages. And many of these constituent elements are even beyond the limits of normal human vision. For example, the strong horizontal lines that appear in several works are a capture of the nanosecond imperceptible flickering electrical current of the overhead neon lights in the artist’s studio, rainbow coronas diffract at the soft edges of dust particles which have settled on the scanner surface, and single drops of ink are skewed and magnified as they’re repeatedly processed. The edge of the scanner bed is also frequently apparent, where multiple layers overlap imperfectly.

Kneale also presents examples from an ongoing series of sculptural objects which similarly to his paintings, explore the reality bending qualities of light in relation to contemporary functional apparatuses. Materials that suggest looking, receiving, and disposing: surveillance mirrors, satellite dishes, and trash cans are combined with handmade, uncoated neons, the visible color produced solely from 9000 volts of electricity beaming through argon gas. The sculptures, titled ‘Lack Holes and Maybe Universes’, mine the intersection between black holes and our current state of mind.

Toby Ziegler (b. 1972) is a British artist who lives and works in London. He graduated in 1994 from Central St. Martin’s School of Art. Ziegler has had numerous solo exhibitions at prestigious institutions including: Post-human Paradise, Simon Lee Gallery, London (2016); Toby Ziegler, PKM Gallery, Seoul (2015); Unused Potential, Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris (2014); Gold, Belvedere, Vienna (2012); The Alienation of Objects, Zabudowicz Collection, London and Sarisalvo, Finland, New Art Gallery, Walsall and Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2011-2012); Hamsterwheel, initiated by Franz West, Malmo Konsthall (2008); Recent Abstraction, British Art Displays 1500-2007 at Tate Britain, London (2007); Toby Ziegler, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield, UK (2007). Toby Ziegler’s work has also been widely exhibited in group shows around the world including at The Royal Academy of Arts, London, Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art, Krakow, Le Plateau - FRAC d’Ile de France, Paris, Camden Arts Centre, London, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and Tokyo Station Gallery, Tokyo. His work is part of major private and public collections including The Arts Council of England; The British Council; Tate Britain; Saatchi Gallery; Francois Pinault Foundation; Zabudowicz Collection; Goss-Michael Foundation; Kadist Art Foundation; and the British Airways Collection.

Paul Kneale (b. 1986) is a Canadian-born artist who lives and works in London. He received his MFA in 2011 from the Slade School of Fine Art and has been working closely with ARTUNER since early 2015. Recent solo and group exhibitions include: High Anxiety, Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2016-2017); Project 1049, Curated by Paul Kneale and Raphael Hefti, Gstaad (2016); Moscow International Biennale for Young Art 2016; Michael Armitage, Paul Kneale and Tabor Robak, ARTUNER at Palazzo Capris, Turin (2015); Free Software, Import Gallery, Berlin (2015); New Abject Launch, David Roberts Foundation, London (2015); SEO & Co., Tank TV, London (2014); Pleasure Principles, Fondation Galeries Lafayette, Paris (2014); /b/ random, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2014); Young London, V22 Gallery, London (2013). He has taught at the Zurich University of Art and has contributed theoretical articles to leading publications such as Frieze and Spike, and has recently explored the potential of leading artist-organized projects with Fondation Galeries Lafayette and LUMA Foundation.

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