

THUMB NAIL TOE NAIL

Organ Projects presents *THUMB NAIL TOE NAIL*, a group exhibition that draws together the work of eight visual artists to consider the relationship between art-making and mass production in the digital age, and reflect on the connection and dislocation to the human experience it brings.

It can be uncomfortable and even inconvenient to be embodied, to stay present and connected in mind and body, psyche and physiology. And yet, to be alert to what's around us through our senses provides us with a nuanced, felt understanding of the world we move through.

Butting-up against the familiar but unexpected, stubbing a toe is a small and uncomfortable, yet salient reminder of our embodied existence. Edge of a door frame, stack of books, tree stump... the unanticipated jostles with life's boundaries pull us back into the present moment locating our bodies within the spaces we inhabit and re-awakening our senses.

Connection is one of the gifts of the online world - through time and space we commune with one another, and yet the essential 'toe-stubbing moments', the ones that jangle us into life are only echoed as 404 pages and pop-ups that need unblocking, reminding us of our clunky engagement with a world online.

Many of the artists in this exhibition create their own toe-stubbing moments as they push together familiar things in unexpected ways, sparking something of a re-awareness and fresh perspective to what they, and we as the viewer, have grown accustomed to in everyday life.

In photographic artist **Lauren Mason's** work, *Thumbnails of Thumbnails* (2022-ongoing) she presents us with the remains of a rather human, un-aesthetic corner of the internet as she screen-grabs amateur photographer's thumbs caught in their own images displaying second-hand items on selling platforms such as Facebook Marketplace. Bringing to the forefront the humanity and awkward utility of these photos which appear on mass, through her recycling of imagery Mason reminds us of the edges of the digital world that remain un-polished, and creates an opening for us to contemplate images we usually scroll past.

Claire Shakespeare works with intuition and material processes to uncover familiar forms on the canvas which often suggest parts of the body, and in turn become visual innuendos. Working in a way that resurrects the final work through the processes of scraping back a painterly excess and re-layering, she re-uses previous unfinished canvases and re-occurring motifs that unexpectedly align to reveal new paintings - the unexpected emerging through the familiar.

Adam Bird's film-based work plays with the uncanny - a sense that we have seen these vignettes before and yet cannot quite place them. Tapping into visual stimuli

that conjure recollections of fundamental human experience such as birth, breathing, moving, and dying, Bird's Lo-Fi approach presents us with an abstracted space between digital and analogue, bodily and otherworldly, which deny us full comprehension of what we are seeing. Mirroring this refusal of full access to a half-recalled moment, **Harriette Lloyd's** work catches us between both layers of painting and of memory. Through the stark white of the paper and cut out forms we are thrown out of the picture plane as we try to enter it. Instead, we are caught in between a spliced filmic processing of memory –the places we're unable to return to.

As Walter Benjamin put it '*Even the most perfect reproduction [...] is lacking in one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be*'. Applied more broadly to re-produced imagery that we come into contact with daily, such as printed advertisement or stock images online, they quickly lose any sense of the particular and take on a 'nothingness'. In our over familiarity and their lack of particularity, these images feed a zoning out and disconnect with everyday life; this is something that the work of **Richard Matthews** and **Archie Nash** play with.

Through selecting and composing pre-existing components in a challenge to make a readymade painting, **Matthews's** work *TICKLE ME*, takes a found image of a fish and second-hand fabric and places them together in a playful way. Returning meaning and specificity of these mass-produced materials through an unexpected pairing, we are made to consider again things we would have previously have bypassed. **Nash** also works with found imagery and text. Isolating them even further from their original context and associations, he layers graphic imagery with painterly gestures and patterns that echo enlarged mass-produced imagery such as ben-day dots. Dispersing text and imagery into pure dots and planes of colour they also disperse their specificness, becoming more universal and taking on a symbolic identity as they are re-formed in unfamiliar ways.

As an artist working with elements of print alongside drawing and sculpture, **Euan Evans** plays with the concept of positive & negative space and repetition characteristic to print making throughout his work. *Maquette* presents itself as an artefact of a process – the plaster block as a test site for further works and the embryonic starting place from which further prints are formed – holding '*the presence in time and space*' and of works yet to come into existence.

Using the language of editing programs such as Photoshop, in **Lydia Stonehouse's** work *Duplication/kiss* the patterned black and white cord that connects the canvas to a clay panel with its 3x3 grid echoes the 'marching-ants' that appear when selecting an area to manipulate, and the compositional tool used for cropping. Stonehouse pairs these nods to the digital world, and ideas of selection and focus, with a painterly suggestion of two forms coming together in what the title alludes to as a kiss. This highly embodied act of connection between two bodies is emphasised by the repetitive patterned cord that moves between the canvas and clay panel, suggesting a movement of energy and sensation between forms through an optical buzz.