

Arti-ficia

Sean Dawson | Chihiro Yoshikura (Kurara)

Alicia Paz | Yu-Chen Wang

Curated by Edward Chell

Open

7 – 22.1.2016

Symposium & drinks:

Thursday 14.1.2016, 2–6.30pm

Artificia has its roots in the Latin term *artificium* - *Ars*, Art (which in its original sense meant ‘to put together, join or fit’) and *facere*, to make. The philosopher Plato interrogated the role of art in conveying understanding through appearances, especially through *mimesis*, and the artificial is still a slippery term that can easily undermine the foundations of practices to which it is adhered.

The four artists in this exhibition approach the *artificial* from varied positions exploring different visual terrains, critiquing consciously or unconsciously an ever expanding synthetic environment - technical, ecological, material and digital - in which we are all increasingly immersed.

Sean Dawson's paintings exhibit a photographic dexterity while alluding to visual fields and objects that constantly evade description. Expressive, gestural brushstrokes are constantly flattened – simultaneously graphic and material.

Alicia Paz's work is similarly evasive in addressing skill and ‘the hand of the artist’. The paintings contain humour and wit; a kind of visual manifestation of the Theatre of the Absurd combined with the characteristic humour of

Vaudeville. Humans morph into plant or mountain forms with a rich and positive visual presence that arrests any existential nihilism we might otherwise feel.

The nascent humour is continued in the poised and balanced responsive installations of **Chihiro Yoshikura** (or **Kurara**). Celebrating ersatz plastic materiality found in mass-produced goods from Pound Shops, these works counterpose Dayglo consumer ‘binability’ with a subtle ecological aftertaste: **Erwin Würm** celebrating Friends of the Earth.

Yu-Chen Wang's work like the others' establishes an ecology of forms where the finely drawn and pencilled hybridised anatomies of plant and machine snake over surfaces with fluid and indeterminate rococo flourishes, sometimes manifested on a surface but often ‘through’ a space combined with object supports.

Artificia runs from Thursday January 7th until Friday January 22nd.

All the participating artists will be present for a symposium, 2 to 5pm on Thursday 14th January in the Herbert Read Gallery, Canterbury. All students and staff are welcome to the symposium, followed by refreshments in the gallery.