

## **Lub Poem**

### LACK

February 11th - April 1st, 2022

I am in a softly lit commercial space. Long wide hallway and a soft carpet cushion my step. As I approach the central foyer I'm greeted with a flood of natural light, neatly organized by intersecting metal rods housing thin glass windows. The light reflects from the glass store windows illuminating corinthian columns on the far end of the food court. There are images floating above, superimposed on shapes like stars, draped by cable, subtle implications of the mood that we might possess on a day like today. There's a promise to feel just how the people in these images feel, to taste and smell all their insensate wonder. Somewhere in this semiological exchange my experience of experiencing becomes confused. In a muted expanse of sensory information the inculcation of feeling anything at all is overwhelming.

Walking through the exhibition it is unclear what your relationship with the work might be. The wallpaper and discrete wall-mounted objects close-in the gallery space, like a private appointment at a boutique shop offering passive delectation. Interplaying surfaces of simulacra and gloss and the gallery wall itself reveals everything is both *a thing* and *a sign*. The simulation of wood grain underneath plexi-glass that refracts the outside world - the faint reflection of the two story house across the street and the gray sky, these diegetic traces also act as frames; dynamic participants in an economy of images despite their attempts to define it. There's a listless quality in this double legibility, thing or sign - as the works recede back into the profane realm of regular objects that exist amongst the humdrum backdrop of life. I find them sort of sad in this way. They appear as strange embodiments of our stylized life world and what might be possible within its limits - an autonomy to cast judgment and a reckoning with that which merely exists without our manipulation.

I move through the space much as I would a store, slowly meandering through the space with no particular goal or attention, allowing the atmosphere and imagery to gently frame my mood. LACK, the title of the show, references the famous Ikea coffee table and, as the artist tells me, "for me the show is looking to poke at the ways that art/design/Culture function as placeholders, filling our need for meaning, purpose and certainty about our position in the world." In this light, the work can perhaps be read as an attempt to imply meaning a priori, using design elements and stock-like imagery as a tool to provoke an emotive response, a generalized sensation.

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It is confusing whether to consider the images as photographs or not, and perhaps the attempt to classify them as such is beside the point. They are photographs in the sense that they are authored by the artist by means of a lens instrument, but, first and foremost, they are read as images. It seems that the subject of the picture, its framing and staging, aims to elicit the affect of minor professionalization, passed through recursive thresholds of vetting and approval. Bred of focus groups, market research, crafted by studio light with precise and disquietingly expensive machinery, emerges the perfect image, one that touches on something without limiting or alienating potential viewers. The speculation of its reception is built into the work itself.

I'm thinking about how this style of image sits alongside the framing elements chosen by the artist: packaging materials, a deconstructed flat screen TV, wood, hand-rendered wallpaper of different varieties. It is as though the image, frame/support and wallpaper exist as different manifestations of the same thing; an attempt to articulate the projection of significance onto the manifold activities that populate our shared world.

I am gazing out at a parking lot as the heavy glass door slowly closes behind me. The cross breeze feels good and the scattered crowd of low-hung cumulus clouds appear so perfect, floating with intention, like they know just how they're supposed to look. There is a drone of cars careening down a highway, nearby but nowhere in sight. I look at my phone to check the time and I regard for a second the wallpaper: a beach at sunset. The clouds today are similar to the ones in the picture and I realize it's been three years since.

- Jack Ryan

Lub Poem lives and works in Middle America. Previous exhibitions include *A New Museum's Triennial*, Fall River MOCA (Fall River, RI), *Minor Rationalism*, Baader-Meinhof (Omaha, NE) and *Joy*, Barnes Foundation (Philadelphia, PA). This will be Lub Poem's second solo exhibition with Baader-Meinhof.