

GWENN THOMAS

with inserts by David Gruber and Alexander Jackson Wyatt

Rare Earth Magnet

Rare	Earth	Magnet
Rapid	Eye	Movement

Dear Visitor,

I am writing this text that was commissioned for the exhibition *Rare Earth Magnet* by Gwenn Thomas with inserts by David Gruber and Alexander Jackson Wyatt while looking out of a window, thousands of kilometres removed.

I browse the streets attached to information zipped down from an immaterial sphere while colliding not only with my fellow walkers. My walk became directed the further I am in need of rare earth circuit boards as an organ permanently affixed to my palm. The world is my oyster, or so I am told, the window in my hand is my hand. On my path, I am an atom, colliding and producing information out of information.

In order to quiet my restlessness I open a book I never finished reading. The page the bookmark is left on, begins with a sentence I now decide to quote: *“All of a sudden, as if a surgical hand of destiny had operated on a long-standing blindness with immediate and sensational results, I lift my gaze from my anonymous life to the clear recognition of how I live.”* Written in 1930, published in 1982, in 1994 the sentence brought my reading to a stop, in 2022 I am caught by its poignant description of the contemporary human condition.

Thomas’s third solo exhibition at the gallery, includes inserts by two invited artists, with me, as the writer of this commissioned text, as the inevitable fourth participant. The flawless digital presentation of the works I received weeks ago is hovering in another window on my screen. Let me introduce, frame, create connection and meaningful content of the displayed works. I try to imagine the works’ collective physicalities, presence and setting within the white-walled gallery space I never visited.

Alchemic experimentations of color, shape and form, collectively considering the inner perspective in relation to an orbiting, partially fractured marginal frame. My device is seriously failing me, not connecting the atomic fractions of content orbiting around my mind. These are restless times and in accelerating speed, do you also feel as in constantly fracturing explosive fear? My job to introduce, to create context and to formulate in times that can’t be formulated I fail to fulfill.

It all began with a collision. A sudden, seemingly unimportant encounter, be it emotional or physical, results in a drastic change of course. At highest speed, particles collide. The mundane shape of a window seen a decade ago in my hometown of Lisbon, has burnt itself into the work of Gwenn Thomas.

The artist’s windows into the self are deeply explored by new alchemist experimentation of glittering formulas of precious glass. As much fragile as infinite, these intricately precious, yet mundane materials held in brass encasements allow for the light of day to reflect its glittering mystery caught within. Metallic gold photographic paper, expired over two decades ago, is painted upon with chemicals revealing shapes and structures that abstract the three-dimensional Rare Earth shapes found in the gallery space.

Reassembled frames from frames filled with collaged content from previous content, somewhat precariously held together. Alexander Jackson Wyatt’s inserts into the exhibition are as individual as they are repetitious variations of form. The casual fragility of the collage is juxtaposed by a frame made up of seemingly discarded parts of wood. The frame makes its presence known, not unlike a medieval protective wall, sheltering the fleeting collage from all outside elements. The result is a battle for attention between margin and centre, between exposure and protection.

Sections of left-over beige frames, seemingly held together by painted brown tape are attached to beige paintings of almost classic comic appearing grey explosive devices. With their explosion near, the bombs circle towards a black abyss, smoke appears. David Gruber’s inserts into the exhibition allure to the precariousness of individual mental states. These paintings are like clairvoyants predicting what we all know all too well.

Obsessive repetition, repetitive obsession. Alchemist experiments, paintings of gold, collaged fortresses, explosive disasters with no miracle cure at hand. Looking out of a window as if a crystal ball into meaning and content, I am certain you will find your own sense, your own conversation with the works and their relation to ourselves.

“It was just a moment, and I saw myself.”

Yours faithfully,

O. Seraos

E X I L E

LIST OF WORKS

Ground floor (left to right)

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet I*, 2022, painting on photographic paper, 50,8 x 61 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet II*, 2022, painting on photographic paper, 50,8 x 61 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet III*, 2022, painting on photographic paper, 50,8 x 61 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet IV*, 2022, painting on photographic paper, 50,8 x 61 cm

David Gruber, *Paranoid reader #2*, 2022, tempera on canvas, 60 x 46,5 cm

David Gruber, *Paranoid reader #4*, 2022, tempera on canvas, 72,5 x 47 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Metallica II*, 2021, copper and reclaimed resin, 19 x 38,5 x 50 cm

First floor front room (left to right)

Alexander Jackson Wyatt, *shocking upright scaffolds (telepathic surface temperatures) / s.u.s. (t.s.t.)*, 2022, structural timber, acrylic, pigment print on canson paper, painters tape, plexiglass, matt varnish, 43,5 x 26 x 7 cm

Alexander Jackson Wyatt, *windows onto wastelands (personality test invites calculated risks) / w.o.w. (p.t.i.c.r.)*, 2022, structural timber, acrylic, pigment print on canson paper, painters tape, plexiglass, matt varnish, 43,5 x 26 x 7 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Untitled Constellation I*, 2022, aluminum, copper nails, paint and seed pearls, 122 x 92 cm

First floor back room

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet (blue)*, 2021, blown glass in steel encasement, 6 x 31 x 23,5 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet (transparent)*, 2021, blown glass in steel encasement, 4 x 24 x 19,5 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet (purple)*, 2021, cast glass in brass encasement, 6 x 25,5 x 21 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet (green)*, 2021, blown glass in brass encasement, 5 x 27 x 23,5 cm

Office (left to right)

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet*, 2022, painting on photographic paper, 25,5 x 30,5 cm

Gwenn Thomas, *Rare Earth Magnet*, 2022, painting on photographic paper, 25,5 x 30,5 cm

David Gruber, *Paranoid reader #3*, 2022, Tempera on canvas, 72,5 x 47cm

Alexander Jackson Wyatt, *half-convinced hessian beginnings (garden variety parallel universes) / h.c.h.b. (g.v.p.u.)*, 2022, structural timber, acrylic, pigment print on canson paper, painters tape, plexiglass, matt varnish, 43,5 x 26 x 7 cm