

Five Easy Pieces

Albert Mertz, B. Ingrid Olson,
Kern Samuel
31. 1. – 16. 3. 2024

Time is sentient in *Five Easy Pieces*. Wrapped in their ardent and solemn thoughts these three artists say no more than is necessary. They speak a laconic visual language, for these inductive states are a feeling and a gesture marked by the implacable need to express the presence of a state of being, for a form cannot measure, nor words define the vastness of the ineffable.

In their delicate sensorial moulding of disparate materials, the shrill cry of ghostly vestiges can be felt. In the fierce and rugged forms we feel the still murmur in the limb of life. Each object contains the minutest details of the permanent and fixed, nothing more, nothing less. Where entropy and destruction reigns in the world at-large, the exhibition contrasts the hurly-burly spectacle of media with a contemplative, and subdued glow.

For the rudiments of scale, proportion, and refinement, reinforces the tenets of a tattered modernity. Tattered, though not broken, things go back to basics. The structures remain sound, the criteria are a constant.

Where rose tints melt into azure washes in Kern Samuel, the modest industrial materials of Mertz (i.e. Povera) transform with noble characteristics, color codes and contrasts, expansion and contraction. Such rectilinear thought forms therein contain innumerable spheres of the visible and invisible; the hidden realms are present. One thing leads to another. Here are three individuals who understand that simple things have no value unto themselves yet paradoxically gain in value as discreet channels of expression. Giving over to this world of external things requires a plainspoken language of interiority regardless of material concerns.

The seductive pockets of architectonic two and three-dimensional space in B. Ingrid Olson, or the inscrutable windows of Albert Mertz therefore obtain a talismanic power. Such quality of elements contains a predisposed reality wrought forth into a given form. In Olson, the Eros of a body cavity, angular as a crevice and a crease, takes on greater proportional volume when inserted into a self-sufficient reduced space. There is complexity in the elegant folds of the simple and formal.

Kern Samuel's subtle emotive palette is impregnated with the recombinant actions of deconstruction where odds, and ends, coalesce into mediations of disparate parts. The fragments are a puzzle reconciled into a whole. Substratums of mixed media (rust, pigment, dye, and soil) transform pieces of stitched canvas, denim, or linen painted or stained with mutant blocks of dispersed color, undulating circles, and crescent moons. Suffused with the material richness of Delaunay and Orphism, these misshapen odes to painterly form are more than loose geometric abstractions; they are delicate filigrees of color and repetition endowed with the metrical rhythm of verse poetry.

At this interval of the ages, some will say that the ground has shifted; against the backdrop of ruinous suppositions and techno Babylon, the wild has won. In fact, as we speak, the *new* is being terra formed. Out of old things the reclamation project hath begun, and shorn its old skin from the fruit of the living. The tide has turned into finer grades of atmosphere of inestimable value. Life is worth living.

Max Henry

