

*New Pictures from Milano Centrale*

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Gentrification is gaslighting on an industrial scale. Gentrification insists you are wrong about your own experience. It denies the way that most people actually live, and instead erects an edifice, clad in privilege, then tells everyone that this is their reality. In this sense, gentrification is a mirror that shows you a false image. As with gaslighting, believing the lie is as easy as it is abusive. This pale simulation that becomes our reality is contingent on the denial of our own, and many others, lived experience.

A quick google maps search suggests it would take 16 hours to get from Hot Wheels, London to Milano Centrale. The route takes me via Kings Cross / St. Pancras. I imagine the journey, with these two monstrously imposing sites as points of contact that I can't resist comparing. At Kings Cross, the project of gentrification seems complete. Walking through its retail spaces, advertising screens, and shiny floors presents no experience at all, just hard work. Our physical inhabitation of these environments props up the edifice, and our participation is remedial, adding to the productivity and functioning of it. We produce and maintain its image. Our presence at once reifies the simulacrum of a kind of life, while simultaneously contributing to life's actual deadening. In our collusion into particular ways of living, under prescribed terms, in the torment of the gaslight, other ways of living can hardly emerge. At Milano Centrale, however, the project is still underway. The edifice is being erected, and the signs are there – Kim Kardashian gives us Dolce & Gabbana, Five Guys hands us a shelled peanut. But in its unsaturated state, life persists in Milano Centrale, still.

It is this life, found in the interstices and crevices of a visually oppressive edifice, that List Thomsen's works reveal. These are documentary pictures. They are structures, paintings, images and constructions, for sure. But they are pictures. A conundrum lies at the heart of the work that provides the impulse of these pictures. In an age so saturated by images that dominate the comprehension of your own life, how can other images that aim to reveal such an experience be captured? How to make pictures of places when places have been reduced to images? So often resistance demands declaration. To declare that an image reveals a truth or a departure from its dominant infrastructure leaves it open to be absorbed by the very structure it aims to critique. It is absorbed into the currency of power. List Thomsen's pictures are immune to declaration and prescription because they are not images as such. They think more discrepantly, fictionally, slyly. They meet one infrastructure with an alternative one. They capture the disposition of a place as image rather than stand against it. In List Thomsen's repeated journeys to Milano Centrale, he would write. He would internally absorb the infrastructures that stratify his experience. This language, internalised in the body, would harbour the marks and impact of the place. Not an image per se, but a place, leaving its mark on and in the body, later imparted onto a set of materials to make pictures. Exposed frames, heavily worked surfaces, alongside photographs and sculptures that contain a trace; of language, the body, the hand, the experience. Not a translation but a transferal of bodily data.

Disposition, according to Keller Easterling is *'the character or propensity of an organisation that results from all of its activity'*. Keller Easterling notes, that to understand the infrastructures that have built our current political climate, framed our experience of it, and codified our behaviors within it, we must attune to their disposition. We must know *'not the shape of the game piece, but the way the game piece plays. Not the text, but the constantly updating software that manages the text. Not the pretty landscape, but the fluid dynamics of the river. We must know the difference between a declared intent and an underlying disposition'*. In List Thomsen's pictures there is no refusal or dissent from this condition, instead reality is fugitively smuggled into the work. The surfaces are the main story of Milano Centrale, but the edges, the underneath, and the behind are the sub-plot. The vending machine water contains piss. Not as a singular, anthropomorphised portrait, but as social body, the humanity of the under commons. The painted surfaces frequently worked over to obliterate the painting beneath, or left untouched as raw canvas, contain trace elements of antibiotics. The bronze is a monkey nut from Five Guys, the photographs a tautological acknowledgement of their new condition in a gallery.

The station and the life it insists on seeps into the body and the body expunges the station into the material of the work. The edges are intentional and highly deliberate. They are not accidents or consequences of making the surface, they are fictional and narrated. Masquerading as handling marks, as traces of previous workings, they disguise themselves as part of normal painting practice. They are worked on separately, happy to appear in drag, cosplaying as part of the main event, because it is in their discrepant relation to the main event that they conceal themselves in the margins and the fringes as things undetectable, telling their own story. Disguised as a consequence, they live discrepantly, evading capture. The interstices revealed in these pictures, and their non-hierarchical relations to one another, whether object, image or structure reveals life – not as transactional but as a free exchange of social relations, hiding in plain sight.

– Lynton Talbot