

John Miller has produced a varied œuvre that includes painting, sculpture, photography and video. With empathy, humour, and insightful observation, Miller plunges into the maelstrom of everyday life to distill the commonplace and the « normal ». While a lot of Miller's previous works had to do with the interrogation of value in a capitalist society and the disparities between the price and the meaning of something, his more recent projects offer at once critical and poetic representations of emotional affect, its relationship to bio-power and its impact on individuals. For Miller, television remains primary source of mass cultural representation. Just as the paintings from the series «Everything is Said», the new series of wooden reliefs presented in this exhibition show people crying on reality television. Their muted pallet of greys and browns removes the images from the tacky glimmer of the mass media and renders them as handpainted artifacts. A few years ago, while executing a series of paintings depicting game shows (1998-2000), John Miller focused on the colorfully designed sets contrasting with the seemingly interchangeable participants. Clearly demarkating itself from this type of programming, reality television claims to focus on individuals and real life, but Miller chose to represent the moment when it all collapses. Crying indeed has become a performative asset. The capacity to emote in front of camera now seems as much a prerogative to participate in such shows, as is beauty or charisma. And while the belief in the transparency of what is shown to us has never been stronger, Miller reminds us that any framing of reality necessarily grows out of a fabricated point of view. Two wallpaper murals contrast with the reliefs. These images are digital prints taken from the artist's ongoing archive of «Middle of the Day» photographs shot between 12 and 2 pm. At this time not only is the sun at its highest, but it is also the time traditionally assigned to the lunch break. This undefined period between, but not really outside, the socially coded cycles of work and leisure. These decor-like pictures become stand-ins for a quotidian social reality and appear in direct opposition to the artifice of television depicted on the reliefs.

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