

CHECKLIST

Artist: Emile Rubino

Title: *Illustration*

Venue: LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina

Dates: 18.06.–09.11.2024

Photo credit: LambdaLambdaLambda & Useful Art Services

All photos: Courtesy of the artist and LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina

01_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024

photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

02_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *Illustration*, 2024, Inkjet print, wood frame, passe-partout, glass
40,8 × 52,7 × 2,5 cm (framed), Edition of 1 plus I AP

photo credit : Useful Art Services

03_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024

photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

04_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024

photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

05_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *Poverty Remix (After Lex-Nerlinger)*, 2024, Laser-exposed silver gelatin print,
aluminum frame, passe-partout, glass, 33,3 × 29,2 × 1,6 cm (framed), Edition of 1 plus I AP

photo credit : Useful Art Services

06_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024

photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

07_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *Made to Scale*, 2024, Dye sublimation on aluminum, wood, 62,5 × 50,7 × 2,5 cm,
Edition of 1 plus I AP

photo credit : Useful Art Services

08_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024

photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

09_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *Goodbye / Hello (Florine)*, 2024, Inkjet print mounted on dibond, aluminum frame,
glass, 32,5 × 49,3 × 2,5 cm (framed), Edition of 1 plus I AP

photo credit : Useful Art Services

10_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024

photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

11_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024
photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

12_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *Adjusted for Inflation*, 2024, Inkjet print mounted on dibond, wood frame, glass, 26,15 × 48,7 × 2,5 cm (framed), Edition of 1 plus 1 AP
photo credit : Useful Art Services

13_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Exhibition view, *Illustration*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina, 2024
photo credit : LambdaLambdaLambda

14_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *Samozveri*, 2024, Silver gelatin print mounted on aluminum, wood frame, glass 59 × 47,5 × 2,5 cm (framed), Edition of 1 plus 1 AP
photo credit : Useful Art Services

15_Illustration_LLL_2024 :

Emile Rubino, *For Greater Clarity (Marine)*, 2024, Inkjet print mounted on dibond, aluminum frame, glass, 49,3 × 32,5 × 2,5 cm (framed), Edition of 1 plus 1 AP
photo credit : Useful Art Services

Press Release :

The seven new photographs of Emile Rubino seem to wink at the viewer. There is a joke, but what is it? His pictures vary in style, size, execution, and framing. Yet, even at first glance, they have a sly coherence. An image of a student holding up a pen and a coffee cup, for example, feels intuitively connected to another of a number of 100 Euro bills resting on the top of a heating radiator. These are presented next to remakes, remixes, or citations of works by Allan Sekula, Alice Lex-Nerlinger, and Alexander Rodchenko. Then something clicks: together, these eclectic images explore in visual form various connections between photography and illustration. It, in fact, is announced rather cheekily in a depiction of a carton of eggs on which each letter of the word I L L U S T R A T I O N is written.

“I became interested,” writes Rubino, “in the shortcomings of photography’s illustrative function.” Fascinated with how limited his metier is when it attempts to illustrate, he decided to research historical examples as well as contemporary ones. In this set of pictures, he attempts to depict something that is often so obvious we cannot see it. Typically, photographs meant to illustrate, either a product or an idea, are supposed to convey their meaning without much difficulty to the viewer. Graphic designers often choose images for their ability to convey a target meaning simply—so much so that their choices can be silly. Rubino here embraces that: the eggs, the bills on a radiator. It is, in that sense, a wry form of détournement.

Reminiscent of the work of Christopher Williams, Rubino’s also grapples with the tension between the sources his pictures cite—whether it is other photographs or theoretical texts — and the subjects they depict. One, for example, portrays a toy school building identical to the one Sekula used in “School is a Factory,” a series about post-secondary education in working-class Southern California. This is further juxtaposed with other pieces that explore stock images; some portray art school students and are reminiscent of university recruitment material.

Others remake works by Rodchenko and Lex-Nerlinger that further the political dimensions of “Illustration.” Rubino seems to ask himself: if photography has a historical relationship to illustration, how have leftists employed that function? And how has it succeeded — or how has it

not? He reimagines, for example, Lex-Nerlinger's photograms under the circumstances of early twenty-first capitalism: a worker injured by the system they hold up. The examination, I think, is sincere, even hopeful, about the medium's political potential.

A key to this lies in the work's formal concerns. Stock photos, propaganda, and adverts normally convey target messages, but here they have all become pictures about themselves. What Rubino does, in effect, is to make visible how interconnected the two art forms are. And that is the joke. In exploring historical and contemporary connections between photography and illustration, he cannot escape illustrating. But humour has a liberating effect. After laughter eases tension, a conversation can move on to new topics.

- Aaron Peck

