

# bittersweet symphony

A D E N M I L L E R  
17-27.09.22

## 1

For his solo exhibition *Bittersweet Symphony*, Aden Miller has converted the gallery into a machine. Gears clog in sequence with functions intended to attract, isolate and suspend.

The gallery walls become site for a display of markings: a constellation is composed from mosquitoes frozen, smeared, squashed and beaten into submission across the pictorial plane. Alongside the insects sits a maquette of a note-less, balsa wood piano; the absence of keys potentially suggesting the mosquitoes' buzz, prior to their conversion into *work*, as the piano's once-melody. Without its warranted lacquered treatment, the surface is rough and unvarnished, of a different language to the clean, plastic objects which line the gallery's perimeter.

An arrangement of mosquito-attractant *squares* are positioned across the tops of the walls, defining a line which dissects through the space. Their assertive presence is calculated, functioning to define the mosquitoes' sparse positioning. Through the *squares'* slow release of octenol - a chemical present in human sweat and breath - they bait a fatal desire-response; this insectile 'flocking-act' is mirrored by gallery-goers' engagement with the *squares'* installation in the space.

Through this, the mosquito becomes subordinate to the squares, stripped of its predatory status. In this preyed-state, they are immediately commodified and reduced to objecthood: a metamorphosis defined by both the gallery as a spatial category, as well as the predictability of its subjects.

This desire is broadened through the blue-toned wash of *UV light* that brushes throughout the room, embodying an observational inclination of wanting to know beyond comprehensible surface. The aesthete stands in the gallery searching for something beautiful.

Stains, dust and hues typically beyond the visible spectrum are amplified in this blue cast. The space is fixed into an eternal *blue period*.

In another space, *UV light* reveals veins. In yet another, *UV light* heals skin marked with scars.

## 2

The mechanism's attraction - circular base - is defined by the suggestion of its function. The circle's spin, a repetition of origin and continuation of *same motion*, as well as, once within the circle's grasp: a fluctuation of speed, alternating the levels of consequence and affect.

3 people stand at equidistant positions along the mechanism's perimeter. Two grasp the edge, as a third simultaneously holds with *upper body* whilst pushing with *lower body*. When *lower body* provides maximum torque, *lower body* is released from the ground. Now, no connection between ground and mechanism exists, with all 3 existing in suspension.

asbestos

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After each consecutive spin, the body becomes limp by effect of the force of the mechanism's pull, mimicking a state of lifelessness; its loss of structure signals a unity with the sequential gesture of the machine. The first person is released from the machine's orbit. They land in its perimeter, marking the un-touched ground with their fall. The marks continue: 3 sets of 2 scattered depending on time of release.

Bereft of an engine, the velocity of every passing spin reduces the whiirrrrr to a descending buzz... internal mechanisms become silent when the object has nothing more to give: bittersweet symphony.

Nature resets the mechanism back to *starting state*, with wind and water mending the marked ground back to a clean slate. All is rephrased within nature's pull; through *cause* and *effect* on its constituent peripheral, loose information is continuously pushed around in a state of suspension, lost in an eventual space of irrelevance.

Text by Alexis Kanatsios

## List of works:

*Untitled*, 2022.

20 NEC FL40SLB UV Fluorescent Batons, dimension variable.

*Untitled*, 2022.

Mosquitoes, spray adhesive, dimensions variable.

*Knot*, 2022.

Balsa wood, enamel, tacs, screws, nuts, glue, hinge, \_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_ x \_\_\_\_.

*Untitled*, 2022.

16 slow-release octenol mosquito lures, plastic, dimensions variable.