

Seth Price inaugurates Isabella Bortolozzi's new Eden Eden space with seven works on plywood.

With their screen-printed photographic pictures and graphic compositions, the pieces appear like diagrams, and from a distance they seem to be flat, like stickers or printed images. They are hand-produced, however, in an intensive but slow sculptural process where grounds are built up in advance of being screen printed, after which layers of pigments are applied, yielding a palimpsest of material surfaces and textures. The artworks hover between design and sculpture, as if the virtual layers of programs like Photoshop have been given physical reality, rendered in low-grade plywood.

Plywood remains the cheapest and readiest of commercial building materials: rough and flawed, carrying all the markings and traces of its making and shipping. Even though wood often symbolizes the natural and the organic, plywood is a heavily processed industrial product, fabricated by compressing multiple, chemically-treated layers. Envelopes, the subject of these pictures, themselves have a hybrid status, originating as flat sheets of paper (another wood product), but made three-dimensional through folding, becoming containers for information, itself encoded on sheets of paper, which the envelope conceals and protects during the journey from one place to another, as it collects its own markings.

Price's torn envelopes enact a collapse of contradictions, bringing together inside and outside, made and found, abstract shape and photographic icon, subject and ground, message and medium. Titles like *Letter From A Military*, *Letter From A Shop Window*, and *Letter From Youth Culture* are suggestive of ways to approach the mood or meaning of the works, but ultimately each picture might be thought of as a rebus that, despite offering essential information, remains enigmatic. Fragments have been collected and juxtaposed, but left in pieces, unresolved.

John Kelsey has written: "Displaying the material basis of modern communication without including any message or address, Price seems to capture the spirit of communication itself. In advance of the faster, ever more immersive communications networks we use today, the postal system could only take off by standardizing both its materials and its subjects. Here, the empty envelope appears as the anonymous, mask-like face of information that summons its own operators, or the fetish that momentarily completes an individual within the constant revolutions of a closed circuit. "

Downstairs, in Eden Eden's notorious and frightening sub-chambers, Price shows two music videos he made last year for distribution on YouTube and Vimeo in order to share songs he created over a decade ago, when they had little distribution beyond limited-release LPs and CDs.

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