

MOORE CONTEMPORARY
David Attwood
Azure Green
21 March – 13 April 2025

The revival of magical beliefs is possible today because it no longer represents a social threat
—Silvia Federici, 2004.

During the Middle Ages, magic emboldened the peasants, giving them a sense of agency and autonomy from the ruling class. At least, that's what the nobility feared. So, witches had to burn. Though these fires helped illuminate the dark passage from feudalism to capitalism, the figure of the witch has returned in high definition. Absorbed and instrumentalised by capitalist aesthetics, the witch is a ubiquitous trope in advertising and product design today. Likewise, the iconography and rhetoric associated with 'magic' and the occult resounds in popular lexicon and media.

In *Azure Green* David Attwood presents a suite of Apple MacBook Air laptops, each adorned with a kitsch vinyl bumper sticker featuring a slogan related to witches or magic. "Protected by witchcraft" one says in gothic font, "Do you believe in Magick?" another asks. These wall-mounted assemblages draw on the symbolic potency of magic in contemporary consumerism. The juxtaposition of the sleek, minimalist design of the silver MacBook Airs and the slogan-emblazoned bumper stickers are jarring. The former is emblematic of the American techno-minimalist aesthetic, reminiscent of cool Californian Light and Space art of the 1970s,¹ while the latter are decidedly low brow.

The exhibition title and the bumper stickers featured were sourced from Azure Green, an online retailer known as "one of the world's largest distributors of spiritual and mystical products." These bumper stickers seem highly kitsch and camp, but the retailer is very serious, at least in their commitment to peddling their product. As their rather dated website boasts: "Your Trusted Source for Spiritual Supplies Since 1986." The products are simply described, the prices are cheap. The blatant commercialism seems sleazy and inept. This lack of romance and mystery speaks to the complete demystification of magic today.

In a telling gesture, the bumper stickers have holes cut in them to reveal the MacBook apple: a reminder of the iconic significance of the apple logo, which was backlit in these older models. Despite the clean aesthetic sensibility of the laptops, the logo is not conspicuous, nor is it symbolically innocuous. The bitten apple symbolises a "bite" from the tree of knowledge, the sin that cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden.

Resembling relief sculptures, Attwood's *Anti-fatigue* works provide a dark contrast to the compact MacBooks, elevating products designed for the ground to the verticality of art. These assemblages comprise rubber anti-fatigue mats and Croc clogs. Formerly regarded as comically casual, the cartoonish simplicity of the Croc has become a staple accessory for the laptop class. Though united by their homogenised matte black rubber, the dotted perforations of the bulbous clogs contrast with the raised massaging nodes of

¹ Defined by artists like Larry Bell, Robert Erwin or James Turrell.

the anti-fatigue mats. Far from a magic carpet gliding on a wind-current, the solid anti-fatigue mat is an innovation of ergonomic design created for office workers who remain stationary for unnatural periods of time. To relieve the tension of idleness, a roller, reminiscent of a crystal-ball, is nestled in the centre of the mat: a little ball going nowhere.

The iconic resemblances and symbolic alignments (and overlaps) between capitalism and magic emphasised in Attwood's assisted readymades speak to the pervasive nature of secular magic today. Therapeutic language, wellness culture, and healing discourse abound with allusions to unseen presences, auras and energies. Indeed, the Astrologist's reliance on maps, charts and calendars echoes a managerial mindset, utilising the same system-oriented skills as white-collar labourers.

In these hybrid forms, Attwood's fascination with the functionally-determined aesthetic appeal of the mass-produced reveals itself. Coily, these artworks acknowledge the ubiquity of banal magic and magical thinking in everyday life, not as a threat to capitalism, but an ideological lubricant.

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