

Zyrland Zoiropa, Pankstrasse 26, 13357 Berlin

Matthew Wilkinson

“Ubik”

01.05.2025 - 01.06.2025



This is an exhibition of mostly new work by Dublin-based artist and gallerist Matthew Wilkinson. Ubik takes its title from the 1969 novel by Philip K. Dick. The exhibition is a response to the discovery of the artist’s far-reaching and intricate entanglement with the Yamaha Corporation. This ongoing realisation led to the production of the work in Ubik.

Using the Yamaha Corporation as a tool for this conscious unravelling is an accident: the same process could be used with anything. It could be water, beef or cotton, computers, shoes or seasons. Yamaha is a means to explore the lengths to which the artist is involved in a specific set of expressions, objects, and processes. The works are also limited by conceptual rules directed by Yamaha: a game applied through mediums—painting, engraving, readymades, video, and abstracted data. This process of making forms sequential repetition and changes, and those resulting forms are linked to the artist’s subjective biographical account.

Ubik is an exercise in highlighting the iconography, engineering, and cultural tools that the Yamaha Corporation produces and how they are cornerstones for Wilkinson’s life. This discovery (that Yamaha had silently entangled itself over many years) was only made plain on observation: Steelie and Cleevie’s musical production, the V6 motor, Bob ‘The Hurricane’ Hannah, graphite tennis rackets, pianos, motorsports, music, and dirt bikes are a catalyst of memory for the artist. The video YZ250n (2016) is the first conscious fetishisation of Yamaha. The bike in the video is a 1985 YZ250 that was restored by the artist; the video documents the

first time it was ridden. The production of the YZ250 began in 1974; Wilkinson has three of them.

The structure of the three flag paintings was dictated using the official Yamaha text and the colours derived from a selection of company racing livery from 1977–2024, form chosen by the Yamaha Corporation: three identical compositions. On canvas, the colours never overlap. Sequentially, the paintings change, and the canvas folds in on itself, abstracting the base composition. The word becomes obscured, the picture plane is erased, as the painting becomes a three-dimensional object. This transformation works in both directions. There is no backwards or forwards.

The hard drive platters are presented trophy-style; they act as relics from the corporation containing invisible data. Partial indexing is engraved below—commemorations of output. The mirrored surface of the platters reflects the viewer (the known unknown); they are unfinished, ongoing.

Obsession or close inspection leads to inaccuracies: fictionally, Stanley Meyer (a practically anonymous electronics engineer, here portrayed by CB) worked for the Yamaha Corporation in North America during the mid-1970s for a period of years. The background to his corporate identity card is the Yamaha blue, a colour that is commonly remembered for Yamaha racing but in this case predates its use by ten years. The portrait is the same size and ratio as a large-format Polaroid positive, the tool used by Chuck Close (amongst others) in his laboured renderings of friends and family. Ubik is one gesture, splitting into multiples ad infinitum.