

"Asemic"
WITH

JAMES ALEC HARDY
ANDRÉ HEMER
HIROSHI TACHIBANA

PRIVATE VIEW 19th of November 2015
6:30 - 9:00 PM

20th of November - 19th of December 2015

Screens radiate in the gloom, pulsing with a strange, ethereal light, forming double cross totems, emanating noise and colour, drawing the eye into their electrical glow. They pulse with vibrations of current flowing through cables and wires as blood pumps through a heart. They are strange, buzzing prophets. Then, light meets light as it crosses the room, finding pale, pastel prints, calm like the sun on a warm, quiet day. Images sit, layered one upon the other, obscuring and revealing in equal quantities, causing the eye to re-focus, trying to discern exactly what is on the edges of sight. Meanwhile, bold, splashy canvases display thick impasto daubs of candy-coloured icing, tricking the eye, daring you to detect where digital and physical images meld and meet. Here, in *Asemic* (20th of November - 19th of December 2015), artists James Alec Hardy, André Hemer and Hiroshi Tachibana bring together works which, although diverse in execution, speak the same abstract language. The practices of these three artists combine digital with physical, origin with final, playing with distance and intimacy in increasingly intense layers. Their work lies on the hazy borders of the asemic, where abstract forms, shapes and ciphers overlap, a bold visual language that creates a vacuum of meaning, speaking at once in loaded sentences and not at all.

James Alec Hardy's practice works with and against the obsolescence of technology, converting electronic signals from one device to another. His large-scale mixed media sculptural pieces are often human-sized or bigger. They bring together broadcast monitors and other redundant technology (frequently in a bid to convert from analogue to digital) to create looming and eerie totem-like structures. Their size, he explains, "is scaled to create confrontation and presence," while his choice of materials brings together a complex visual language of video signals, symbols, electrical errors and glitches, and, importantly, noise. By extracting and looping images, Hardy comments on the ever-increasing role of television as depicting 'reality' – then brings us back to its most basic binary elements to create something far more complex than the over-processed images we are usually fed on our screens. "I maintain the idea that reality is simple 'perception management'," he explains, "and I am weary of television media being used to create a 'heightened sensory perception of 'reality'."

An integral part of each piece is the performative aspect, with Hardy using sound as a physical force – as an electronic signal to stimulate video and vice versa. Images compose themselves amongst the noise, an organic and complete system self-generating before our eyes, an animate totem, a resurrected deity, a living, breathing creature composed of the awe-inspiring power of electricity, cables and points of light. If ever God was in the TV, it is here.

Where Hardy shocks with colour, Hiroshi Tachibana draws in our focus with muted pastels and pale hues. What the artists do share, however, is a mutual use of light. For the Tokyo-based artist, light imbues him with the ability to explore time and space. Its ultimate intangibility allows him to "think about the ineffableness of a connection, a relationship, and the influence between people and myself." He begins by loosely tracing photographs, catalogue images and children's drawings onto polyurethane, before transferring them with a gel medium onto canvas. He then carefully builds up layer upon layer to create muted images that have a Gerhard Richter element to them, something of an over-saturated, over-transferred memory that at once embodies a vast build up of visual information, yet appears wan, even washed out or obscured.

Like asemic text then, these images become unreadable, like a primal script, or what the artist refers to as "scribbling with lights or doodling in the air." There is a story behind each and every image, but it is unreadable in the final product, translated to an intangible moment, a feeling of light, an abstracted language. Titles such as *Dream (Letter to Samuel Beckett)* or *Photograph (Frida and Björn)* serve only to tantalise rather than illuminate – like grasping at shafts of sunlight.

Finally, with the works of André Hemer, we are brought back to the raw, vibrant and visceral. Like Hardy and Tachibana, he plays with a clever layering of media to create an interlooping dialogue within his works. "I'm interested in re-materialising contemporary experience, much of which is predicated on digital distribution, exchange, and process," he has said. "Rather than a linear transaction from digital to material I'm interested in playing with transactions that go back and forth." His brightly coloured abstract pieces combine scanned images with physical paint, creating sculpted forms which are then scanned and transferred into digital images, only to be printed back again onto canvas and painted over and over again. His impasto technique gives them a three-dimensional quality, the hand of the artist present in the thick swirls of paint, but also, more subtly, in the melange of digitally manipulated images with which they are fused. It is this play between traditional and new, digital and physical (or, rather, analogue), two- and three-dimensional, that gives them their complexity. This creates a break with what we expect to see and what we are presented with – a melding of art historical moments into one canvas, rather like the mixing several paints together. "Ultimately the paintings are an amalgamation of media, but very much unified as a painting object," he has explained.

Indeed, what unifies the works of these three artists is a complex ability to layer and interweave visual references and techniques alongside a conceptual complexity that makes them particularly tantalising. Digital points and nodes send pulses through circuits that feed infinitely into each other – sound creating image creating sound, while layer upon layer of paint simultaneously obscures and reveals complex histories. The physical and digital meet on canvas in a similar self-sustaining loop, noise and sound giving way to pigment, physical and digital, intangible like light. They are visual codes, complex languages that speak in many tongues, discernible to no one ear, but speaking to a greater whole.

***Asemic* runs from 20th of November - 19th of December 2015
at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, London**

Information for journalists:

James Alec Hardy

English video installation artist James Alec Hardy (born 1979, Colchester) was educated at Camberwell College of Arts, London. Sceptical of the ways in which of new technology lends itself to the entrapment of minds using specialised propaganda and manipulated suggestion, Hardy creates work that subverts and repurposes old technology. Using obsolete analogue equipment, arrays of monitors are symbolic motifs, simple tribal shapes are interrupted and reconstructed, and video sequences are performative, produced by the physical manipulation of machines. Video acts as an object rather than a virtual electronic portrayal of image and sound. Immediate and sensitive, it conveys his ideas directly in our age of high video literacy, functioning as the meditative stage for the mind, which unravels its own truth, by suggesting that truth and narrative are ultimately subjective. Recent solo exhibitions include *Modular 1304*, ArtMoorHouse, London (2013), *Trapped in the Machine*, The Hospital Club, London (2013), and *Decadia Broadcast System*, Home Front, London (2012), while group exhibitions include *No Alarms and No Surprises*, Ritter/Zamet, London (2015), *Mackerel Sky*, Whitechapel, London, (2015), *Oscillate Wildly*, South Kiosk, London (2014), and *James Alec Hardy Dominic Beattie*, The Depot Gallery, London (2013). Hardy lives and works in London.

André Hemer

André Hemer (born 1981, New Zealand) is a painter whose work explores the intersections between digital media and painting. He received his PhD in Painting from Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney, Australia and his MA from the Royal College of Art, London. His works embrace and reveal the transformations and transactions occurring between the contemporary digital image and the traditional painted object. He has exhibited widely and is represented internationally in Australia by Chalk Horse Gallery, Sydney and in New Zealand by Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland and Bartley and Company, Wellington. Hemer also works with Public Delivery in Seoul on public projects, an initiative curated by Martin Schulze. Recent solo exhibitions include *New Representation*, Chalk Horse Gallery, Sydney (2015), *New Representation Part II*, Bartley and Company, Wellington (2015), while group shows include *André Hemer - Paintings 2005-2015*, Pataka Art + Museum, Porirua City (2015), *A Hot Mess* at Fatiha Selam, Paris (2015), *Metarealism*, Palmer Art Projects, Sydney (2015), *100 Painters of Tomorrow*, Beers Contemporary, London (2014), and *Critical Intent*, curated by Gary Sangster and Fan Lin, Guangzhou Art Center, Guangzhou (2014). Hemer is currently based in Paris.

Hiroshi Tachibana

Born in Hyogo, Japan, artist Hiroshi Tachibana earned his MFA from Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts, New York and, prior to this, received his BA in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts, New York. Tachibana has exhibited widely in both Japan and the USA, including recent solo exhibition *Emerge* at Sprout Curation, Tokyo (2014), and group shows *New Balance 3*, curated by Sprout Curation, at XYZ Collective, Tokyo (2015), *Correspondence*, curated by Steve Clorfeine at Westbeth Gallery, New York (2015), *About Space*, curated by Jason Stopa and Jordana Zeldin at Art Bridge Drawing Room, New York (2013), and *Her Name is Abstra* at Daido Warehouse, Kyoto (2012). Tachibana has been the recipient of much press, with articles in ArtForum (2014), Blouin Artinfo (2013) and inclusion in the "30 Artists to Watch" feature in NY Arts Magazine (2012). Tachibana lives and works in Tokyo.

Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

Kristin Hjellegjerde opened her gallery in south west London in June 2012 following her move from New York. The gallery showcases cutting-edge contemporary art from emerging and established international artists, with the central concern being to create a focused, intimate space in which artists can present a coherent, innovative body of work. Drawing on her own international background, Kristin Hjellegjerde seeks to discover and develop new talents by creating a platform through which they can be introduced to local and international audiences and allowing for artistic exchange. Kristin Hjellegjerde also acts as an art advisor for both emerging private and corporate collectors. For more information, visit www.kristinhjellegjerde.com.

For further information and high-resolution images, please contact Kristin Hjellegjerde on khjellegjerde@mac.com.