

Builders

Christopher Donnelly

Ewan McNeil

Reese Terris

November 23 – December 30, 2020

There is a subset of artists that are also professional contractors and builders. The work of these artists is directly informed by their involvement in the construction and building trades. They share a common interest and appreciation of how things are made and the history behind the shaping of our man-made environment, acutely aware of the impact the materials and processes they use in their working lives can have on their art making practices.

Christopher Donnelly makes sculptures employing both the materials and the tools of the building trades. Traditional joinery techniques are pushed to extremes turning easily recognizable materials into beautifully crafted visions of elegant absurdity and tension. Underlying this work are the descriptive drawing techniques of architectural blueprints. His sculptures often suggest the cutaway and the axonometric image, referring the physical thing back to its instructive illustration, reimagined through the lens of Dada and the ready-made.

In the work of **Ewan McNeil**, the focus lies in the stripping down of the formal qualities of a building or structure to its basic forms and replaying these through a painted reproduction of a photographic reproduction. The source images are appropriated from film and the internet; media landscapes which consider architectures fundamental influence on our lives. His work is inspired by the form of these structures and the underlying ideas that impact their design and construction.

In some cases, the art that is produced is a direct response to the place itself. **Reese Terris** provides us with a site-specific work and its photo documentation, the results of a residency that took place in Austria in 2014. Here, the buildings and their geographic location are of historical and political significance: during WW2 this was the site of a forced-labor camp and prisoners were compelled to construct the original dam. The history of the structures and their current re-use as a location for artistic exploration informed the intervention that Terris staged, involving the construction and placement of large signs on top of the buildings – *Art Camp* over one set of buildings, *Work Camp* over another.

The resulting photographic series is a combination of four small colour photographs and one large black and white print, with the large black and white print carrying associations of traditional documentary photography. The juxtaposition between the two formats creates a kind of chronological slippage, that oscillates between the past and present, the site, the work and the photographs presented in a gallery setting.

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