

Anthony Green

Né en 1973 à Welwyn Garden City/UK.
Vit et travaille dans le Kent/UK.
Born in 1973 in Welwyn Garden City/UK.
Lives and works in Kent/UK.

Expositions personnelles

Solo Shows

2022

- Lifestyle, Art : Concept, Paris/FR

2012

- Again, How Can We Carry On?, Zabłudowicz Collection Invites, London/UK

2011

- How Can We Carry On?, Outpost Gallery, Norwich/UK

2009

- A Report, Limoncello Gallery, London/UK

2011

- Young British Art, Curated By Ryan Gander, Limoncello, London/UK
- Peeping Tom, Curated by Keith Coventry, Kunsthal KaDe (Amersfoort)/NL

2010

- Point Of Address, Curated by Peter Suchin Outpost Gallery, Norwich/UK
- The Library of Babel / In and Out of Place. 176 Zabłudowicz Collection, London Peeping Tom, Curated by Keith Coventry, Vegas Gallery, London/UK

2009

- One Dimensional Man, with Edwin Burdis and Barry McGregor Johnston, Curated by Matthew Williams. International Project Space, Bournville/UK

Expositions collectives

Group shows

2022

- Call Me, Curated By Francesca Gavin, Galerie PCP, Paris/FR
- Exercises In Style, Curated By Novel, A Plus A Gallery, Venice/IT

2015

- Bottom Natures, Curated by Matthew McQuillan, Cafe Gallery Projects, London/UK
- Behold Continues to Retreat, Curated by Mark Titchner, Bethlem Gallery, London/UK

2012

- Soundworks, The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London/UK
- Young British Art II, Curated By Ryan Gander and Christina von Rotenhan, dienstgebaeude, Zurich/CH

Anthony Green

Revue de presse
Press review

Anthony Green - The Landscape, The House, The Face: A Report

Artvehicle 46/Review

19th November 2009 — 19th December 2009

For his first solo show in London, Anthony Green's work extends and clings to the walls of Limoncello like the rhizomatic tendrils of some Deleuzian triffid. In fact, though never named, Deleuze is alluded to so conspicuously in the press release – peppered as it is with the philosopher's distinctive jargon – one might be tempted to interpret the work through a wholly Deleuzian lens – to commit the work, as it were, to a Deleuzian agenda. The 'report' of the exhibition title too seems to back up this sense of lurking didacticism. However, the work itself – despite the apparent ease with which one might affix Deleuzian tropes to it (or any other philosopher for that matter) – resolutely resists any partisanship of meaning or demonstration. Rather, it seems that Green's exhibition might actually be critiquing the very risk of a hermeneutics of art.

Bits of familiar stuff (a flattened paper lantern, a record sleeve, badges, bulldog clips, jay-cloths, magazine pages) gather in crowds around familiarly shaped and processed materials (wood, foam, denim, rubber, card, plastic, plaster) which in turn give way to clearly art-like objects: expressionistic shapes and weird, protuberant pebbles, decorated in a variety of ways. These pebbles (an awkward term, but the most formally faithful I can think of) – turned and rounded by a tide somewhere – are the most singular aesthetic forms in the show, providing something of a precedent for the rest of the work; nodes to the other component's shoots. Sometimes studded with slightly raised images of noses, mouths, folded flesh; other times tightly tailored into blue-jean denim or hemmed cotton – these pebbles sit in an ambiguous space between sugar-coated pharmacological lozenge, and that more theoretical and inverted object of capitalist desire, 'organs without bodies'.

Limoncello

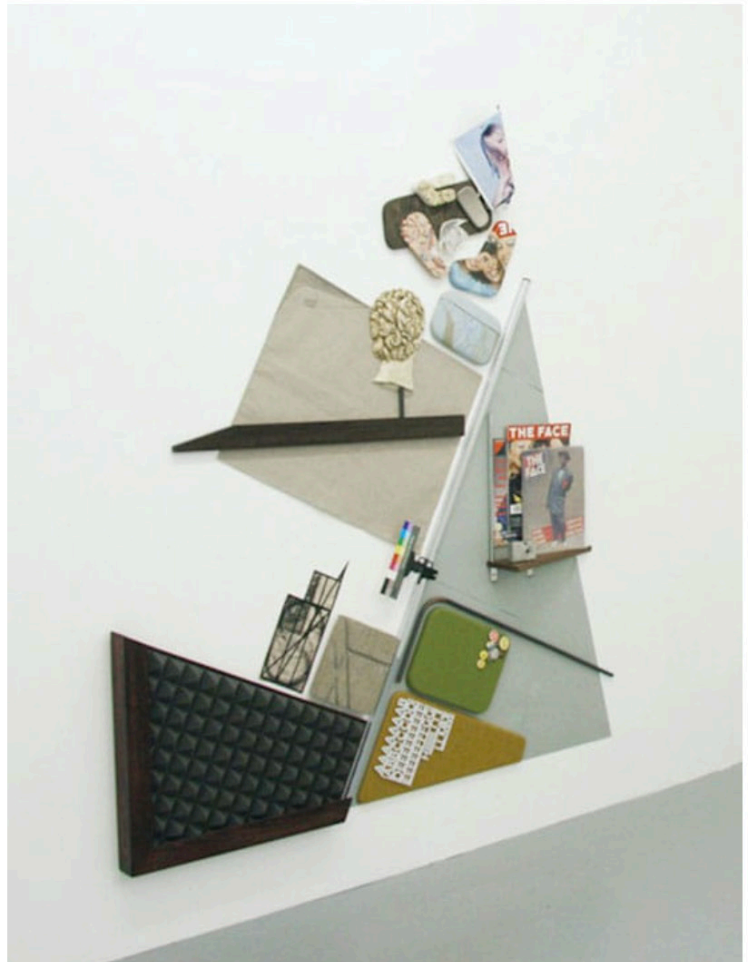
15a Cremer Street

London E2 8HD

<http://www.limoncellogallery.co.uk/>

Open

Thursday-Saturday, 11am-6pm



In the piece, 'A Report: The Face. A Room. Heating Up', a sordid little cluster of these liminal, libidinal objects float above a vertical layout of stuff – formally rhymed and positioned with a seemingly arbitrary 'rightness'. A familiarity of material bleeds uncomfortably into a foreignness of form, forms that are shaped by their position amongst many, rather than by their singular material content. A triangular slice of what could be the foam-lined wall of a sound studio abuts a square chunk of concrete incised with a pattern of deep furrows, and a piece of deliberately cut newspaper gridded in black ink. Individually, each component is manufactured via discrete, albeit parallel, processes that might demonstrate – through sheer ubiquity, perhaps – a particular industry, complete with its own histories, cultures and associations. In this state, however, an overview of these fragments is far more feasible than an isolated focus, the different elements becoming homogeneous in their singularity. At this height – because the half-depressed plans of Green's work might be most basically understood as somehow topographic – a pattern emerges, however convoluted. Noticing that this pattern exists seems tantamount to the ascription of meaning; interpreting that meaning however, is another matter. Like the irony of ironies that Walter Benjamin describes in 'The Concept of Criticism in German Romanticism', the recognition of a pattern or a plan or a coherent 'report' within Green's work serves to entrench the sense of mystification that, according to Benjamin, serves as a fundamental facet of art. Any systemic allusion within Green's work serves to affirm itself, over and over again – but as a form of mystification rather than elucidation.

The press release goes so far as to describe the work as 'devoid of any hidden depths or mystery'; that 'the work exists as pure surface generated from a set of contingent irrational rules informed by Green's rigorous conceptual practice'. The idea of 'contingent irrational rules' is strikingly oxymoronic, belying something perhaps deliberately ironic within Green's work. The revelation of a system of rules at work, tantalisingly glimpsed through Green's conceptual veil, is surely an example of an ironisation of the form itself: the genuine order that is at play within Green's work is that of the idea of art – the remit of art – and a belief in art's 'indestructible sublation in that idea' (Benjamin). The denial of depth within the work might then describe merely the physical shallowness of the pieces that hug the wall, daring only to protrude a little – just enough to resist the categorical ease of sculpture (an inch further), or of the drawings that are also in the show (an inch back). We might then also understand Green's latent commitment to Deleuze as a similarly ironic gesture, at least in part. Green's apparent insistence that what we are seeing in and of the work is a collection of movements rather than objects (or 'becomings', to use Deleuzean parlance) that are unceasing in their intense and sensational, positive progression – meets its determined critique in the immobility of the work itself – its clear ossification as art.

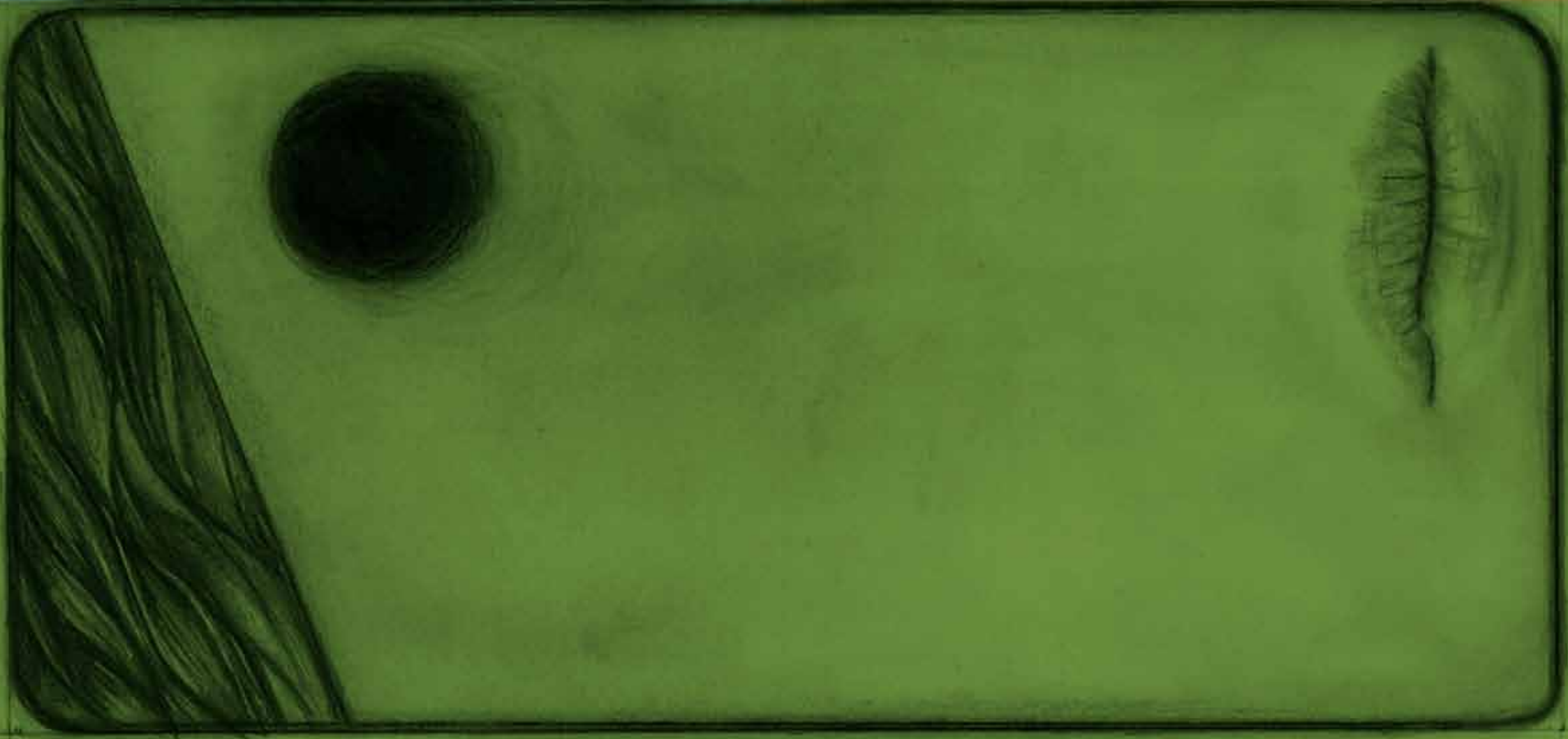
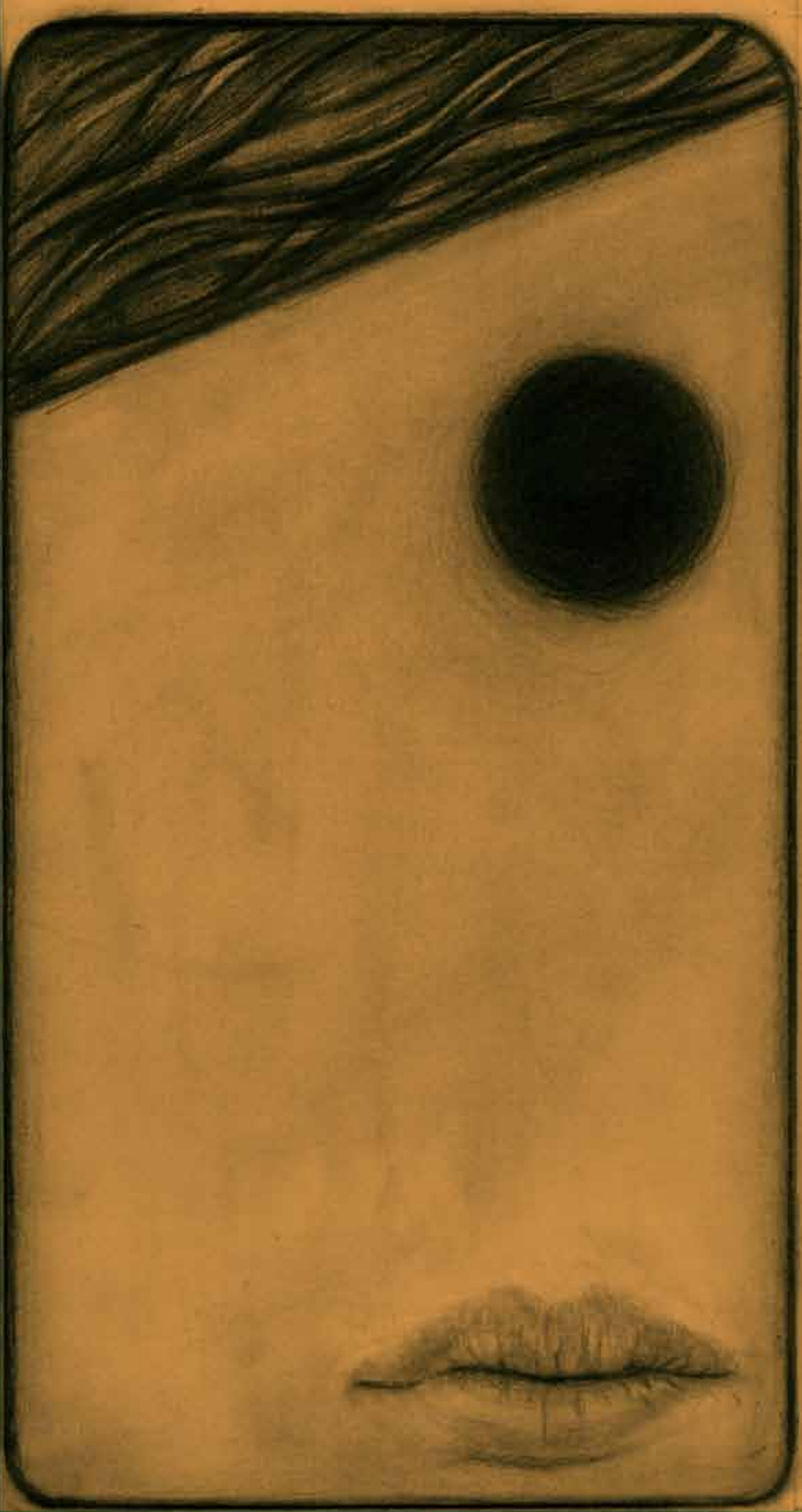
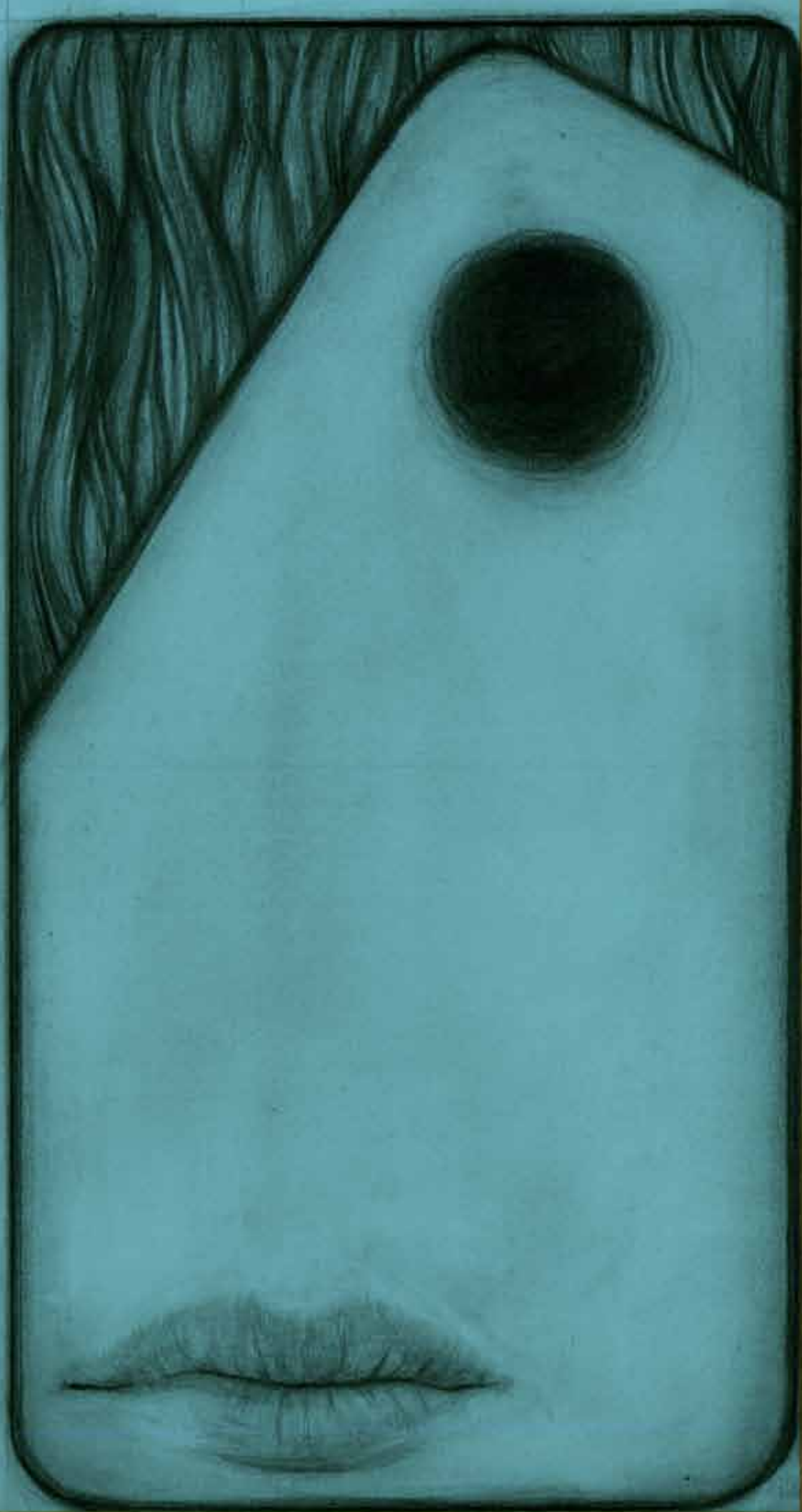
The failure of the work to actually become a diagrammatic representation of these ideas, or to enact their key tenets, is, ironically, what returns the work to its status as art – uncommitted and equivocal; whilst also alluding to some of the contrary and problematic aspects around notions of 'becoming'. It's what serves to maintain the work's position as in-between; promises of recognition and of interpretation are returned spurned, disassembled and insoluble.

Ed Atkins

'A Report: The Face. A Room. Heating Up', Anthony Green 2009, Mixed Media



'Another Stroll: How Can We Escape Our Petty Little Fascisms?', Anthony Green 2009, Mixed Media



Anthony Green interviewed by
Ellen Mara De Wachter



Ellen Mara De Wachter: Your work contains meticulously produced components, which you bring together in assemblages of drawings, sculptures and reliefs and, for the first time, as an installation with *Again, How Can We Carry On?*. How has this spatial development changed the way you think about your practice?

Anthony Green: I guess the most precise answer is that I don't know because it is yet to happen. As with all my work, I'm approaching the installation as a means of experimentation. The idea is simply to bring lots of elements in, play around with different compositions and see how they work. In terms of spatial questions, I've always imagined a mature and fully extended version of my practice to involve all dimensions and media. This installation is a tentative move towards sculpture. A productive and important tension in the work is between the image and the object. The works operate in a shallow depth in-between painting and sculpture, a shallow depth, which is the psychological space of illusion. The palette of objects I'm working from is charged with memory and associations of memory. My intention for using them is to do with a feel, a mood or a sensation.

EMDW: A work like *Christopher Williams* (2011), the large wall relief in this show, is composed of flat images, reference tools such as colour gradients, text and sculptures. Can you talk us through the elements in the work and how they function together to create meaning or a story or something altogether different?

AG: The elements or segments in the relief are not in the service of a particular meaning or narrative, but rather they are in spatial relationships with each other and within themselves. The work functions in-between these objects – a geographical story of territories and thresholds. The elements are also in relationships of speed – in terms of their

production, intensity and how they're read. By way of these relations I'm attempting to produce a change in level, an immaterial movement of sensation.

EMDW: *Christopher Williams* also has to do with desire and the production of desire, in terms of the way Williams photographed objects that were used to stimulate desire, i.e. advertising tools or tropes. Your mention of affect, sensation and the invitation the work extends to engage with it in different ways, makes me wonder whether the question of desire arose for you in making this work?

AG: In a very real sense, desire is the material of the work. There's a very even focus of desire across the different speeds of the objects; so the dirt in the work is as fetishized as the sheen is. Christopher Williams, the photographer, foregrounds an industrial logic involved in this kind of image. These images, without the familiar post-production, show the economies, tools and structures, which shape them. The joy in looking at his works is that they give you all the seduction of capitalism but without the PR: you're not being sold anything, which allows you a pleasure in the image's means.

EMDW: You've talked about your work as challenging the meta-phenomenon of representation, which could be defined as a desire to make images of some "thing" in the world, which is considered somehow more real than the art itself, a compulsion that runs through the history of art. However, there are obvious representational qualities to your work. Facial features, for example, are meticulously realised, and you've included found objects and others produced to mimic a highly manufactured aesthetic. How are you interfering with this cultural tendency towards representation, and perhaps coming close to achieving something that is truly more real than the art itself?

AG: I realised that representation is this kind of polemical enemy for me, to the point where it stopped me making work at one stage, because I had such a desire to make something that was non-representational, that everything I did failed as soon as I started it. I was trying to make things without any referent at all, which was kind of mad. It was an issue even in relation to artists I like, such as Francis Bacon, for whom representation is a real target, but who still used illustration and representational elements in his work. It was a lesson that took me a long time to learn, that I could use representation to go beyond itself through the way representation fails itself and that this was a way that I could engage and accept my fascination for representation. Although my work is made up almost entirely by representational images, I don't think they are in the service of a representational logic. A tactic I started to allow myself was to try to imagine the worst representation of what I wanted to make and have it as a virtual starting point, which gave me an immense freedom, suddenly. My use of representation is always straining at the edges of representation; I'm interested in where it falls down and is exposed. Stock photography libraries are an important source of imagery, style and tone. I love their attempt to represent everything – for me they are representation in its purest form and show it as an ideology.

EMDW: What relationship does your practice have with theory? You are obviously informed by contemporary philosophy and aesthetics. In what ways do you let theory influence your practice; or conversely, your practice influence your understanding of theory?

AG: My use of theory is very practical; it's a toolbox from which to steal tactics. In the past I would often deal with problems or impasses by reading. Even though that didn't produce a work as such, it was a way of carrying on working.

In terms of overall approach, the main thing I have taken from philosophy is the problematising of things, and the productive nature of that. I tend to think of my work as proceeding by problems, which is where I'm most creative. Mapping the impossible conditions of something that forces you to think and to act.

The question of artists' relationship to theory often induces anxiety and I think it's generally agreed that a bad relationship of art to theory is the attempt to illustrate it. The general question of the anxiety of influence reminds me of the advice of Michael Craig-Martin, that I heard second hand. He suggested that you own the work of an influence to such an extent that you imagine you've just made their last piece of work. So what are you going to do next? It's a head-on way of dealing with that relationship without the shame of it. At times I've adopted a similar approach to philosophy and even attempted the terrible idea of representing it – purely as a means to produce an impossible problem to get out of, to force me to think.

EMDW: In your work, it's clear that each element has been carefully made: drawings are meticulously rendered; supporting elements to the reliefs end in flawless infinity curves at the bottom; the finish is very refined. And yet there is grubbiness to some of the elements, for example with some of the flesh-tone pellets, which are evocative of lumps of genetically modified lab-grown protein cells. They seem to have accumulated filth and dirt, as if they had been stroked for good luck by many hands or partaken in an abject lifestyle for too long. It's almost as if you have staged an intervention in order to vilify the pristine finish of the work and make it ugly. Can you talk about this phenomenon of rendering the perfect imperfect?

AG: I think of those flesh-coloured elements as very formal, because they come out of drawing and they are a

solution to formal problems. I started as a painter, and always felt that paint has an amazing history of being able to break out of representation, but I couldn't think of any way to do it better than Francis Bacon had done it. A lot of the detailed, kaleidoscopic aspects of my work are almost like a hallucinogenic version of that paint; I wanted to think about how you can recreate this sensuous blur of material, but have it as an image. Those elements became a way of imagining this intensified, magnified, slowed down thing.

In terms of the ageing and dirtying of the elements, your reading is spot on. It came from when I was first trying to figure out the paint finish on the relief objects and was looking at polychroming. There's a long Catholic tradition of this kind of sculpture and they do paint them in a very even, but slightly nuanced way. A few of the sculptures I looked at had marks where there had been devotional touching, which had worn through the paint, and it exposed the mechanism of how it was put together. I loved that combination of exposing the make-up of something – so working through the layers of paint to show the wood – and the duration of this process. Duration is a very important idea to me in terms of thinking about how to put something in the work other than simply the image. I think about this in relation to Matisse or Picasso and their use of revision. You can see with Matisse, the way he has vaguely represented a table, which has come about through a coalescence of various permutations and mistakes. This somehow gives a much stronger reality than a direct representation would. And it has time in it; there is an accumulated duration to the images. So it has something more real than the object itself. I'm always trying to put time into my work, to pack duration in.

Artist's presentation
Anthony Green
Sunday 3 March, 3pm

Zabludowicz Collection Invites is a new initiative dedicated to presenting young, UK-based artists who do not currently have representation by a commercial gallery in the UK. Taking the form of eleven monthly solo presentations, exhibitions will result from an open-ended invitation to exhibit new work.

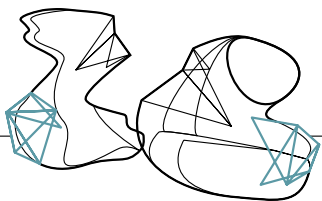
Reverse: detail from
Again, How Can We Carry On?, 2011
Mixed media installation
Courtesy the artist

176 Prince of Wales Road
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Opening times
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Upcoming Invites
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Lucy Woodhouse
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John Summers
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O London

Anthony Green

19 November – 19 December

Limoncello

For Anthony Green, surface is everything. The artist's wall-based practice of mixed-media sculptural assemblage and graphite drawing transforms a disparate array of objects into an aerial geography of lines, colours, patterns, forms and counter forms. Six graphite on paper works, despite an airy lightness of touch visible in Green's semi-abstract drawing, leave no surface uncovered in their relentless shading. Attention to surface, and indeed the inclusion of some mainstays of graphic design history (archive copies of *The Face*, retro Pelican paperbacks, even the humble J-Cloth), seems to drag the viewer's attention away from the usual conceptual narrative lineage of the medium and into something more subversive.

What emerges through Green's use of readymades is something akin to a pictorial language. It is a language, not in the careful choreographed lingo of the graphic designer, but a language with idiosyncrasies, mistakes and an evolution integral to its sprawling growth across the gallery walls. Green reveals the facets of this language with the precision and cartographic mapping of a colonial anthropologist picking his ways through the props of the last few decades. There is also, however, a sense that the language has gone beyond his control and become more than the sum of his designed parts.

This antagonism of control is also evident in the use of the bodily parts and flesh-coloured forms within the works. In 'The Wall. The Organisation, Waiting', 2008, mutated suggestions of a fleshy hand forms the basis for a selection of collaged found media comprising of photographs depicting eyes and limbs. A similar motif is reiterated in the largest work of the show, 'Another Stroll: How Can We Escape Our Petty Little Fascisms?', 2009, alongside a litany of figurative motifs throughout all the sculptural works: heads up coins, two mannequin arms in shirt sleeves, a replica of a Greek bust, fragments of painted portraits, as well as the cover of the now defunct *Face*.

If language is taken as the basis for human subjectivity – as a means of communicating an idea of a self to others – then in Green's mirrored world the language of the sentient sits, or is even subsumed, by that of the machine: the economic machine of which the sculptural coins symbolise a mere face, the consumerist machine glossed by the style magazine, the combinations of language and technology an LP sleeve

represents. An image of an eyeball, popped from its socket in 'The Wall. The Organisation, Waiting' can be understood as a reference to cinema's infamous humanoid *Terminator*.

Recognition is picked out again in the hollowness of the two dark boring graphite holes in 'Absolute Redundancy', 2009, akin to eyes, long dead. The installation titles, almost nonsensical, seem to derive from this mechanical homage. Syntax is surrendered to a stutter of one-word statements, with liberally littered punctuation. The wording makes both implications to the stop-start of mechanical rhythm, a recognisable motif in the post-Ford industrial age, but more importantly, to the failure of a language as it is emitted from the human perspective. The allusion to Barthes and 'Death of the Author', 1967, is paramount here and brings the viewer back to Green and his seeming

powerlessness as master of the sprawling landscape he has created. Green the author has become unimportant, taken over by his creation with the same implication as that that beset the human world in the 1980s Arnie fight-fest. Formally though this cartography has a retrospective quality to it: the Fordian age is long surpassed, the mechanical stutter, replaced by the purr of software; the tribal anthropologist fast become an extinct species itself. Consequentially there are questions left unanswered, and an uncertainty to the work, deliberate or otherwise. Taken as a whole, Green's geography paints a dystopian world, one with recognisable forms that seems disturbingly not so distant from our own.

Oliver Basciano is an art critic based in London

