

KATE TUCKER

Catalogue essay by Tai Snaith

The view from the eye of the storm

Kate Tucker's latest exhibition View Finder presents a series of harbingers of visual saturation and change.

In each of our daily lives, which many of us live online, we are bombarded with signifiers of style and perfectly constructed views through slick interfaces.

As a society we seem to have gradually moved from consuming actual things (apart from food) to consuming images of things. Billions of images are traded, exchanged and devoured by billions of hungry eyes every second.

We collect, pin, link, copy, paste and post with feverish activity. We feel like it is something we must do because we can. A part of who we are, a rich resource from which to build our patchwork online identities. Some of us create, but more of us consume.

Tucker's work is a kind of beautiful regurgitation. A blended, deconstructed view of our times of hyper accumulation and aesthetic consumption. A final, pixilated mush of all the things we know we don't need, but still want.

This is something we have seen before in times gone by in the form of fabric patchwork, collage, cut and paste, etc, but intriguingly and what makes Tucker's work so important, is that it is so much more than this. Kate's work is searching for something. Each canvas seems to frenetically search for a new point of view. A place where the eye can rest amid the chaos of everyday life. It is this journey of the eye that she works and re-works through a constant battle between light and dark, just as in life we struggle daily between good and evil, until she finds a view.

These are not easy battles. Sometimes evil is disguised as good and vice versa. Sometimes you need to fail or to taste the murky depths of grey in order to relish the watermelon moments. But without both extremes, we would be living in very boring times indeed.

Conceptually, Tucker's works possess an interesting paradox. Reminiscent of the role of the conflicted beauty of the Socialist 'Spomenik' monuments left as abstract signifiers of 600 mass grave sites throughout Slovenia post World War II, built predominantly in the 60's and 70's. These arresting, giant concrete structures are breathtaking in their solid, silent presence. Their visual beauty is astounding and undeniable. However, their darker purpose and meaning is almost lost to abstraction. Their stance is neutral, referring to nothing but themselves. Due to the complicated set of circumstances these monuments were created to reference they needed to be neutral enough to be acceptable to both victims and perpetrators. But, what is interesting here is that over time, due to their abstract appearance, void of literal signifiers, they have almost become sites of forgetting rather than remembering.

In a lot of ways, Tucker's work is like this. A very specific series of political and personal streams of input are poured in to create a place of neutral, beautiful forgetting. Many fragments of conflict, consciousness and controlled desire are blended beyond recognition. The product is a new identity that we can hang on our walls to reflect upon, to project our own aspirations and moments of solace, meditation or remembrance onto.

This comes out of a real desire for purity versus a very human acceptance of chaos. Many of us can identify with Kate's work, as we battle with this balance every day. In fact, the fabric of life seems to so often be made of ugly, dirty, imperfect details woven into some kind of coherent, functioning, durable and often charmingly patterned material. The colours and forms are equally familiar in their softness as they are in their contrast and sharpness.

Much like the view from the eye of the storm, Kate has created a series of calm centers amid chaos. However, we can look forward to a new kind of storm on the horizon, as it is a known fact that the eye only lasts for a short while before the wind picks back up from the opposite direction. Usually more fierce than before.

Tai Snaith, 2012

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