

Capitalism, Eclipsed at Max Hetzler

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Frank Stella, Study for Princess of Wales Theater, Toronto, IV, 1992, pixel painting, Photo: def image, Courtesy the artist

In one word, “Open Source” is a polymath: temporally, spatially and subjectively. The show, on now at Galerie Max Hetzler, presents a selection of artists who have utilised new technologies, embraced the future, and confronted the anthropocene. In their work, they have mapped cyborgs, post-humanism and ecology whilst critiquing the economy that allows its existence.

With Jeremy Rifkin’s book, “The Zero Marginal Cost Society: The Internet Of Things, The Collaborative Commons, And The Eclipse Of Capitalism”, as a starting point, the three curators Lisa Schiff, Leslie Fritz and Eugenio Re Rebaudengo present a vast show, with thirty seven artists, that takes place in three galleries, across two countries, alongside a handful of billboards and one virtual dimension (Artuner.com). The programme has also included a talk at the Palais de Tokyo hosted by the president of the Paris gallery and an interview between Rifkin and Hans Ulrich Obrist to be published in a book based on the exhibition.

Eugenio Re Rebaudengo is the founder of Artuner, an online curatorial platform for collectors and one of the co-curators of “Open Source: Art at the Eclipse of Capitalism” explained the reasoning behind the show: “This is an unusual show for a commercial gallery: its strong subject matter and dialogue are at times anti-

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establishment. Sometimes you have ideas but you need money to make things happen.” Of course, naming a show for the demise of the structure that creates it is a powerful statement, and one the curator is aware of: “I’m sure we will sell works – we are not trying to reinvent the market...but we are trying to create a viewing platform from the last 25 years in context to this.”



Daniel Keller, Stack 1, 2014, Photo: def image, Courtesy the artist

This exhibition seems to create a unique timeline of critique, both visually and globally. The oldest work on show is one of Frank Stella’s enormous pixel paintings from 1992, and the most modern are barely a month old, from artists like Josh Kline, Ajay Kurian and Reena Spaulings. “The exhibition covers three main topics: social themes, the climate and technology. Take the work of Sebastian Lloyd Rees; these plywood boards are the fencing that provide security across London – they separate the masses from the soon-to-be-gentrified sites. The artist steals the original plywood, replaces it with a new one (he has to, otherwise he will go to jail!), then takes it back to his studio to dismantle and re-structure into what seems like a painting, but he never paints.”

In the show’s conception, there is some attempt to cover all bases, in terms of the types of work it shows. “It’s critically important to show works from artists of all ages: it’s beneficial to see Alex Israel next to Christopher Wool. There is a big problem with ageism in London, it’s refreshing to see it’s slacker in Berlin! From a curatorial perspective, I like the teaming of works such as Bernadette Corporation’s video on the BP oil spill next to Richard Prince’s Instagram portraits – we are splurging in excess!” The inclusion of the latter’s controversial works, created

last year, shows the epitome of what the show is about: the intersection between capitalism, particularly that of the art market, and our “always on” approach to technology. Re Rebaudengo adds: “He is a fantastic artist, so rooted in his ideas, but he never repeats himself. Look at the iconic Marlboro ad, and now it’s Instagram: the same world but different.”



Josh Kline, Installation View, 2015, Photo: def image, Courtesy the artist

There are certainly moments of darkness in the prognosis of this temperature-taking show: Josh Kline’s severed hands, clutching the bottle of bleach is harrowing – our need for a clean utopia will eventually render us crippled. His breathtaking new works comprise three large cleaning trolleys, extending from the wall in varying colours from charcoal grey, to Milka purple and ubiquitous 3D printing blue. Cleaning brushes, chemical bottles and the cleaners themselves, (in the form of disembodied heads and hands) lay listlessly on the cold trolleys.

“Kline was saying to me the other day, ‘I am writing an email, but I am also the email, I become the email.’ It’s kind of post-human. The human is becoming incubated through production,” Re Rebaudengo says. This is one of the many works in the show which explores the disbandment of human production for its much-needed counterpart, the machine. However, you can also see the beautifully rendered craftsmanship of the object as positive progression. Rifkin firmly believes there will be no singular artist in the future – the concept of it verges on the absurd, and ownership of ideas will be obsolescent. Instead, there will be creative collectives, group thought and production – art without ego. In this, there could be hope.