

Mary Mary

HUNT, ANDREW; BLINDNESS — EXHIBITION ESSAY CATALOGUE, GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2007



Hetherington's portrait from 2007 is an obvious case in point. As he indicated in his message, his painting — essentially a work in progress at the point I saw it — shows a number of baseball-capped protagonists whose features are obscured by palette-like smears of paint. One could say that these traditionally demonised characters embody radical forms of subjectivity; at once they provide a clear signifier of contemporary culture, yet present various abstract de-facialised heads. The fact that these areas represent formless random palettes, also suggests a politics of representation in line with late conceptual practices. One of a number of texts written on a shield reads 'Hello! Please may I misrepresent you?', while another figure waves a flag with a huge and monstrous diversity logo created by Hetherington. While this indicates a critique of cultural policy and target audiences, it does so by forming an affirmative twist on the fact that art is meant to be good for us. Here we have examples of the very people that the authorities think need educating, mostly through bad quality government-sanctioned socially-engaged projects, who are pictured attempting to throw the gesture back at the viewer.

The important thing here, is that if this work signifies the blindness of the 'ned' — perhaps through the drug induced fug of each scrambled portrait — then this is a myopia that we ought to take notice of, and look to for guidance; it's a case of the blind being able to lead the blind, or help those of us who are mistakenly convinced that we can see clearly. Again, this is a portrait of a radical subject, who aims to tell the truth of a new world, and in the process skews existing regimes of identification. In a perspectival shift then, as art insiders, we are the unenlightened ones, looking to be helped by a deviant avant-garde underclass that exists in another infinitely more strange and powerful dimension.

*I can't get my eyes checked
My blues eyes can't get checked
I'm only one leg
I said to poster,
'When's the curfew over?'
I said, 'Blind man, have mercy on me.'
I said, 'Blind man, have mercy on me.'*

Hynd's recent work shows a similarly deliberate form of evasive imagery. Her work takes a formal concern that goes beyond representation, and her use of collage, for example, references a multitude of art historical precursors without any focus on negativity. The fragments in her work don't point towards the actual process of fragmentation, or the latter category's connection with anxiety, instead her recent constructions concentrate on the quality of each element's ability to unite, link or connect disparate elements to form something new.

She quotes Richard Tuttle in her correspondence 'Liberate the eye and mind to roam in tandem from sensation to disinterested, even disembodied thought, and back again to sensation.' And also Hans Arp 'A cut that separates humankind from the goal it longs for oneness.' Hynd's work aims at a collage homage of painted and sculpted elements that belong to Brancusi, Arp, Tuttle, Matisse and Picasso, but where the elements that once held a key position in the creative process are now missing, subtracted from the compositional structure. This is where space is presented in terms of a solid, and solid in terms of a void, while the possible elevation of the fragment or trace of something becomes the key element of the work in its own right.



Hynd is also interested in the idea of the shadow existing as an extension of a form, and in her previous work *The Art of Assemblance* (2006) this showed itself in the wooden elements that resembled darkness and shade in a way that represented scattered fragments. This interest in shadows lead her also to work with the Man Ray photograph *Kiki with African Mask* (1926) and it's these traces that she has become interested in separating and making her own, so that they can exist in their own right. Again, any blind spot in this work exists in Hynd's opening up of previously inaccessible spaces through compositional structure, where void and solid operate through the ambiguity of both elements.



*Blind man have mercy on me
Oh Great One I am a mere receptacle
The egg tester for your sandalwood
and over asserted roots¹*

One could say that both artists hold a similar irreverent fascination for art historical models, and if Hynd utilizes the Modernist reference points mentioned above, then Hetherington's interest ranges accordingly, from the hooded portraits of Philip Guston, through the history painting of Stephen Campbell, to Terry Atkinson's Goya-inspired portraits. Even Campbell and Atkinson's penchant for long titles is taken up by Hetherington, whose own texts are suggestive of bizarre events unfolding (one work by the artist is called *Privileged mis-representer subconsciously attempts a quasi-corporeal merger with the market research project worked upon, resulting in the flattening of difference*).

If we are dealing with new forms of subjectivity or a new psychology, then perhaps we are starting to see a trend that is informed by an unusual constellation of disparate elements, as much by affirmative art practices as by literature such as J.G. Ballard's dystopian ruminations on unexpected revolutions, and a formal concern for art history and history painting. By turns, if Lynn Hynd and Lynn Hynd are both artists that skew existing visual languages in similar ways, then perhaps this exhibition will prove to be an important one, as it represents modest but important transformations in art practice at this present moment in time.

Andrew Hunt



Image from Lynn Hynd's *Privileged mis-representer*

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IMAGES

the page

- a Lynn Hetherington, *Studio delinquents and the Member from attack using the international language of confusion*, 2007
- b Lynn Hetherington, *Untitled*, 2007
- c Lynn Hynd, *When articulated become home*, 2007
- d Lynn Hynd, *A pause in a silent conversation*, 2007
- e Lynn Hynd, *The art of assemblance*, 2006

COVER

- f Lynn Hynd, *Accupulated moment*, 2007 (top)
- g Lynn Hetherington, *Privileged mis-representer subconsciously attempts a quasi-corporeal merger with the market research project worked upon, resulting in the flattening of difference*, 2007 (bottom)

FOOTNOTES

- 1. The Fall, *Blindness* (2004)

New commissioned writing by Andrew Hunt



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IMAGES

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- c. Lynn Hynd, *When attitudes become forms*, 2007
- d. Lynn Hynd, *A pause in a silent conversation*, 2007
- e. Lynn Hynd, *The art of assemblance*, 2006

cover:

- Lynn Hynd, *A sculpted moment*, 2007 (top)
- Iain Hetherington, *Privileged mis-representor subconsciously attempts a quasi-corporeal merger with the market research project worked upon, resulting in the flattening of difference*, 2007 (bottom)

FOOTNOTE

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