

The Missing Archives - Ross Hansen

2 August - 9 September 2014

In 2012 the artist Ross Hansen stopped making new images. Instead, he began to unravel, catalogue and document the machinations of the working practice behind the resolved image; re-making and re-presenting new works from his ~~Back Catalogue~~
back catalogue

The works presented in *The Missing Archives* see Hansen continuing to invert or fold his practice in-on-itself. His investigations are here presented in three distinct, but conceptually consistent and inter-related series of works. These meditations on the value attributed to artistic process and outcome, range from ~~the re-contextualising and re-framing of found objects and studio detritus,~~ ^{and in the} the archaeological excavation and reproduction of the primed supports for former works, through to the painstaking documentation of the unseen elements of a working process. ~~The significant absence throughout this show is that of any resolved images. In their place~~ We are presented with excerpts from the strata of working practice that lie beneath the traditional outcome.

The artist's decision to peel back and expose to scrutiny the workings of his own creative practice was triggered by a combination of different factors and influences. *'I've done this before'*, is a revelation experienced by many artists. Given the essentially cyclical nature of much artistic production, Hansen made a conscious decision to surrender himself to this perceived inevitability, and in so doing attempted to regained creative control of this re-visitation.

The artist also has a long standing disregard for the conventions of 'artful' picture construction. Indeed his practice to date could even be viewed as the systematic ~~deconstruction~~ ^{deconstruction} of one taught principal or painterly device after another. ~~No convention is beyond re-assessment and nothing is regarded as sacred.~~ Indeed, the artist's re-evaluation of the creative process extends far beyond the application or not of pictorial conventions. The entire value system attached to artistic production is here brought into question, including the traditional attribution of value and status to *finished works*?

The removal of the resolved image, and therefore of the need to resolve images can liberate an artist to explore the fertile possibilities offered by the provisional. Here this is considered from both minimal and maximal perspectives, from works heavily invested with time and labour, to the slightest re-contextualisation of a disregarded object. This tension is perhaps most extreme in the documentary style drawings that are presented in the show. These record in painstaking detail the collected detritus that gathers around the production process. Elevating the wastage from the creative process to the status of subject matter is to re-position that process as the outcome.

The plot that we encounter
A second series of works take the form of re-painted gesso grounds on enlarged linen and plywood supports. These are distillations, re-makes of pre-existing works from which the painted image has been subtracted; the apparent minimalism of the works contradicted by the 'hyper-real' reproduction of the painted edge.

Reframed detritus take 2 forms
The third group of works see the artist transporting the museum storage facility into the gallery space. Wall mounted mesh screens are hung with an assortment of boxed, mounted, encapsulated and framed artefacts: all the evidence of a vibrant studio practice. That the works are presented in-storage immediately locates them in an intermediary context. In fact, the experience of seeing the show is rather like that of visiting the artist's studio and surveying the arrays of works in progress, studies, experiments and archives.

The sh... are based... elevated... 2 different... archive... as the preservation of the objects in an archive... are either hung on mesh screens or mounted in niches but never...

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The *Black Box Recordings* are a curated selection of sketches, studies and prototypes presented in archival print storage boxes. The disparate artefacts are both ready-made, and saturated with artistic labour. The juxtaposition of the different works encourages association; commonalities and themes are suggested, narratives are intertwined and multiplied. The viewer's comprehension of the whole shifts with each new connection found between these excerpts from Hansen's artistic time-line.

Every one of the works in this exhibition refers to an absent other or others; collectively they form an archive of missing works. The viewer is presented with ~~the~~ evidence of an artistic practice however definitive statements remains somehow elusive or just out of reach. This exhibition invites the viewer to look beneath the surface of a practice and to re-think their relationship to what they discover there.

Ross Hansen (1973, UK) studied Painting at Newcastle University before completing a Master's degree at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. *The Missing Archives* is Hansen's third solo exhibition with the gallery. Collections include: FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, UBS Warburg (London), Beth DeWoody (New York), and private collections in the UK, Belgium, France, Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Hong Kong and US.