

Press Release

Exhibition: Data Capture
Solo exhibition by Eric Butcher
Opening: Wednesday 18th November 2015 6-9 pm
Exhibition dates: 19th November to 19th December 2015

Patrick Heide Contemporary Art is pleased to announce *Data Capture*, a new collaboration with British artist Eric Butcher. In his first solo exhibition at the gallery, Butcher will present recent and new works ranging from his wall based installations, serial works in oil and graphite to works on paper.

Working primarily with oil paint or graphite suspended in resin, a transparent monochrome is spread across the surface of an aluminium support and then stripped off, using a variety of metal blades drawn across the surface. This procedure is then repeated, slowly building up an accumulation of thin residues. Butcher's technique is rooted in the tradition of abstract painting, though his process is mechanised and more precise. So too are his supports; rolled aluminium panels, strips or extruded box sections of different sizes and shapes, the products of industrial manufacture.

Over the past two decades the painterly process has been distilled to a set of rituals, patterns of behaviour, endlessly repeated. A mechanistic performance that evidences an increasingly deterministic approach to the creative act. Significant elements of decision-making are systematised rather than relying on the contingent, intuitive or whimsical. The visual outcome is determined by three factors; the physical characteristics of the support, of the instrument of stripping and the interaction of the above mediated by the artist's hand. Butcher's creative practice is rule governed and reductive yet leaves the pictorial outcome of its composition partly to chance.

Paradoxically, in adopting this quasi-mechanised approach - free of emotion, free of explicit content - a quintessentially human quality emerges. When compared with the perfection of machine production, the limitations and failures of the human hand are writ large. Everything in the painted surface that deviates from a flat, featureless monochrome is predicated upon error or impurity, human or material.

Butcher's installations are sculptural rather than painterly, populating potentially limitless spaces, spreading up stairwells, around corners and to ceilings. They consist of variously painted geometric forms arranged according to studies in chance and randomness. The series consisting of multiple panels also possess a rather object-like character. A shifting and fusing of colour emerges from panel to panel, at times interspersed with an untouched aluminium surface, like the 'control' in a scientific experiment. The colour tones shift as well, in some works from muted to bright and iridescent, in others the progression relates more to brightness or texture as with the almost charted shades of grey in the black and white series executed with graphite.

Eric Butcher has been awarded a Multiple Perspectives Fellowship at the Centre for Art International Research (CAIR), Liverpool School of Art and received various grants from Arts Council England, most recently for the national touring exhibition *A Machine Aesthetic*. Butcher has exhibited internationally, his work is part of numerous private, public and corporate collections, amongst them The Open University, Milton Keynes and he recently realised a series of installations for Invesco Perpetual, London in 2015.