

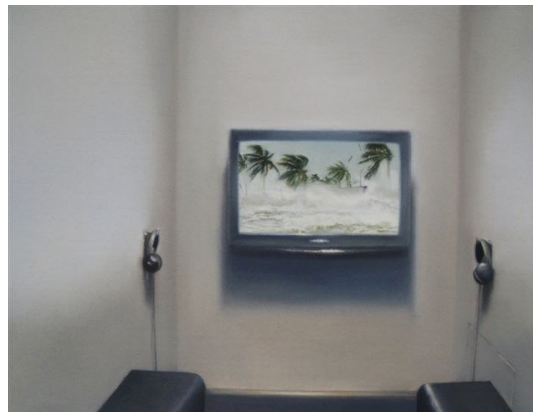
Purdy | Hicks

CLAIRE KERR – NEW PAINTINGS
26 FEBRUARY – 20 MARCH 2010

Purdy Hicks Gallery is pleased to announce their second solo exhibition of the paintings of the Irish artist Claire Kerr.

In a similar manner to previous works, the subject matter of Kerr's most recent paintings belie their extraordinary execution. What could be a selection of visually engaging yet random photographs is revealed to be a collection of small masterpieces: painstakingly painted from a variety of visual ephemera in astonishing detail. Present throughout this new series of paintings is the theme of exploration into the possibilities, limitations and ambiguities in both depicting different ways of seeing and the physical construction of images on a two dimensional surface.

The images interact with art-historical and contemporary sources, often 'staging' and 'performing' representation itself, which is then made to function as a mask that both displays and occludes a complex of meanings. In *Hurricane* the artist takes as her starting point the experience of watching a video installation of the titular weather phenomenon at a gallery. Viewing art in surroundings that often incorporate themselves both physically and visually into the art itself, thereby compromising its ability to inform and our ability to engage, is something she feels to be an aesthetically exaggerated experience. By presenting the scene through a two dimensional painting this contrast between the work and the space around it is heightened, emphasising a striking distinction between the physical stillness of the gallery and the visually disordered subject matter of the installation.



Hurricane 2009 oil on linen mounted on wood 12 x 16 cm

Boy, part of a triptych, plays on the concept of perceiving connections between apparently varied subject matter within the images, rather than trying to locate meaning through a specific repertoire. The work takes as its focus a glass negative, an object that is no longer used or even seen much in contemporary photography. Placed upon a light box, a tool that is as inherently modern as the plate is old fashioned, the image shines forth in negative and is painted as such. The physical characteristics of the object itself, its darkness, fragility and transparency are removed by the solid surface of the painting and the milieu of light which it inhabits. This provides an air of stability to the image which is at odds to the various

components and visual sources from which it is created. The sense of stillness juxtaposed with visual intensity is amplified further by the slow production process, the layering paint over a long period of time.



Boy 2009 oil on linen mounted on wood 12 x 16 cm

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