

MODERN PAINTERS

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“Wanton Mobility” at KLEMM’S // June 29–August 9 2014

The recent media sensationalism surrounding the tragic events in international waters (such as the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight 370 in the Indian Ocean in March 2014 and the capsizing of the *Costa Concordia* in 2012) impacted not only the environment—introducing the age of Anthropocene—but the art world as well. As its title suggests, this exhibition could be described as an homage to the material transformation of waste. This show of all female artists (curator Arielle Bier chalks the decision up to “pure coincidence,” adding “if it was a male-only show, no one would even ask”) focuses on the human impact of consumption.

We all know the images of wandering, decomposing islands floating in the ocean, beyond national borders. These masses of trash interact with the water and evolve into new organic objects. A similar theme is at work in Molly Smith’s recycled paper sculpture, which looks like a bunch of coffee filters or a big, beautiful, layered seashell, depending on your viewing angle. Her other two works, *Peel* and *Rot*, are made out of rusting metal and deal with issues of representation and industrial use.

The three matching, horizontally striped canvases from Fiona Mackay function as the horizon of the show. Made with the Indonesian batik technique, in which you dye the fabric for several time, the pieces are a reminder of beach holidays and tropical travels. Traveling and belonging also play an important part in Alisa Baremboym’s *Lox Luggage*, an almost-bursting suitcase with a digital print of a salmon print on it, filled with cans of (Russian) salmon. As a child of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, Baremboym’s work is defined by the transformation of cultural identifiers and positions.

The conceptual show is full of details and leaves a lot of room for imagination, such as the rolls with black and white pictographs that look like futuristic hieroglyphs from Lisa Williamson. Environmental issues are a perilous topic in an aesthetics-dominated gallery scene, as often visuals are of a lesser importance than preaching. But the selected artists are able to share intimate experiences of cause and effect without any didactic morality.

-Mirthe Maria Berensten

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