

Pastoral (Grind and Drone)

Michele Abeles, Motoyuki Daifu, Doris Guo, Taro Masushio, Zhang Peili, and Trevor Shimizu
January 17 – February 24, 2019

The artworks in *Pastoral (Grind and Drone)* address the passage of time, the inevitability of being put out to pasture, and the resignation that comes from seeing the world differently.

In a manner reminiscent of cinéma vérité, Zhang Peili's *Scenic Outside the Window* (2007) shows the changing weather outside of a gallery window, which shifts between mist, rain, strong wind, and sunshine. When first exhibited in Hangzhou, China, the video was projected opposite the window that it depicts, suggesting an illusory second window in the room. It is an early example of a working method referred to by Zhang as "the scene," in which a filmed reality is juxtaposed with its physical counterpart. With the original window absent in the current display, its site specificity is consequently muted. The installation offers a detached commentary upon contingency and change.

Michele Abeles' *Nymphaea pubescens* (2019) appropriates a scene from Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*. The cool pastel tones of the series, which spans approximately 250 oil paintings, are abstracted by Abeles into a pattern, or atmosphere, for a distorted, almost plastic, photographic surface. Attached to the Plexiglas face, two clocks return the viewer abruptly to the present. *Bodega Bay Fishing Hole* (2018), a large double panel landscape by Trevor Shimizu, likewise references *Water Lilies*. In this, a body of water is surrounded by rocks and trees, while scratchy, muddy brushstrokes suggest movement and the dancing reflections of reeds. With deadpan humor, the artists see nature as composed, contrived, and contested.

In *Untitled (Fold)* (2014) by Taro Masushio, a photographic still, which suggests the contours of a human body under a blanched linen bed sheet, is the genesis for a two-channel video. The colors in each channel are inversely manipulated, with whites fading to blacks in one, and vice versa in the other. At the midway point, each screen is grey. The image is temporarily faint, like an afterthought that is quickly dismissed. Two sculptures by Doris Guo, *Fences* and *A reach* (both 2019), further explore the intimacy and containment produced within domestic spaces. Through isolated, miniaturized descriptions of everyday forms, they evoke tepidity and aridity, among other untraceable feelings.

With a palette of saturated reds, blues, and greens, six untitled photographs (all 2018) by Motoyuki Daifu capture quotidian moments in Tokyo's suburbs. In each, there are no human figures, as if concrete infrastructure and vegetal life possess an overwhelmingly greater agency. Frozen snapshots of a country whose ageing population and shrinking workforce have been linked to its diminished economic growth, Daifu's streetscapes have a powerfully static quality to them, and a denseness that encourages slow looking.

In all of these works, the act of observation is layered and operative. The viewer becomes the subject. What does it mean to cling onto ideals when all else seems to work against them?