

PROJECT SPACE

Project Space
School of Art
History of Art &
Cultural Studies
Leeds

PRIVATE VIEW

Wednesday
25 September
6 – 8pm

EXHIBITION DATES

26 September –
11 September 2019

Alaena Turner

Second-hand Gestures

Prior to undertaking her doctoral studies Alaena Turner worked as Honorary Research Associate on the Materials Research Project of Slade School of Fine Art, UCL (2013-14). In 2016 she was awarded the A.P.T Curatorial Fellowship award for her project, ‘Ingredients, Method, Serving Suggestion’. Recent exhibitions include, ‘Bloomberg New Contemporaries’ 2019 at Leeds Art Gallery, ‘The Everynight’, Torreloft, Copenhagen (2017) and ‘AutoAgents’, The Bluecoat, Liverpool (2016). Alaena Turner is currently a Lecturer in 2D Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London.

Alaena Turner

Second-hand
Gestures



‘Second-hand Gestures’ takes its title from a description of inauthenticity offered by the protagonist of Tom McCarthy’s 2005 novel ‘Remainder’. In McCarthy’s novel memory-loss motivates the protagonist to pursue an elaborate plan of re-enactment, physically re-creating environments and choreographing daily interactions according to vague memories, with the aim of constructing an ‘authentic’ experience. In this exhibition, McCarthy’s proposition that a gesture might register as ‘second-hand’ due to a heightened consciousness of oneself performing an action, acts as a framework to reflect upon the nature of contemporary painting and the prevalence of strategies of appropriation.

The compositions in this exhibition are all based on existing historical artworks, drawing on a range of references, including Vilmos Huszár, Blinky Palermo, Mary Heilmann and Yaacov Agam’s design for the original ‘Mondrian’ hotel. Here re-making existing artworks serves the purpose of negotiating the history of abstract painting and the way in which abstraction repeats, through the recycling of gestures, styles and motifs. The starting point for this body of work was research into reconstructions of Piet Mondrian’s last studio and the apparent continuation of his work after his death, through a series of copies and appropriations. A plan of the South elevation of Mondrian’s studio and fragments of the East-facing wall composition, known retrospectively as Mondrian’s ‘Wall Works’, acts as the base design for this installation.

Alaena Turner is staging this exhibition as part of the final examination for her practice-based PhD at University of Leeds. Her research explores re-enactment as a methodology, situating contemporary painting in relation to archival forms of art practice. Her research project was awarded a full doctoral scholarship from the White Rose College of Art and Humanities (2015–18).



