

The approach

Phillip Allen *Deepdrippings*

21 February – 24 March 2019

Opening preview: Wednesday 20 February, 6-9pm

Phillip Allen's paintings act as reminders of what painting can be, that painting now is where we can best confront art rather than succumb to any of its increasing politeness or provocative conventions. His relatively modest paintings include their own noise and are not content to sit obedient as 'figures' on a wall 'ground'. They are not simply mere art objects contained and catalogued to be instagrammed and kept tame within screens or four walls, but are paintings that don't actually tune anything out, that seem to resist singular contexts.

In this, Phillip Allen's paintings remind us of the power of static, of old television sets left hissing on far into the early hours... a lost memory between channels. Static combines noise and impossible visuals in a marginal, best occluded, moment. It is anti-attention, a kind of automatic anti-art, and where it used to be a sort of night-bound unconsciousness it is now something lost to digital certainties; a best forgotten, often unnoticed, old artefact; a confusion of sound and vision gone from our now more streamlined worlds. It is left to Paint itself to remind us that art can stand against all kinds of baited allures in Art, and for painting itself to include the very thing that new forms of 'Society Art' and other tight-lipped Painting Cults, concerned only with polite belonging and/or the cascading illusions of endless modernities, tune out.

Instead, this artist's patient embrace of implied 'static' actually connects to the entropic static of our old 'real' spaces just as surely as Jeff Koons reflects the noisy mess that his sculptures' own polish apparently disavows. Phillip Allen's paintings are in tune with our dominant entropic reality. They are a resonant sanguine realism in which artistic perfection and life's imperfection operate as one thing. Beauty and Ugliness act together and Art and Life are enacted as single, all inclusive, manifold form all along with the Old and the New that we vainly try to choose between.

It's hard to remember sometimes that painting can be the enemy of painting, but when we do remember that fact everything can make a lot more sense, and not just for painters. Through his paintings, Phillip Allen reminds us, and I suspect himself, that painting's actual power is to be an enemy of Painting. In his work, Painting as its own worst enemy are reconciled again and again. What each painting is comprised of is at one with what it excludes... literally, the painter includes what he has scraped off, so that what each painting has scrapped becomes part of bringing new life into the old art school truism: 'what's not there (in a painting) is as important as what is'. What's been removed from the painting is the Painting and what we're left with is 'it', as that endlessly noisy stuff appealing to all our senses at once: Paint.

– Phil King, 2019

Phillip Allen (b. 1967, London, UK) lives and works in London, UK. Exhibitions include *Deepdrippings*, Luca Tommasi Arte Contemporanea, Milan, Italy (2019); *Deepdrippings*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2017); *Fully Awake*, blip blip blip, Leeds, UK (2017); *Phillip Allen*, Dolph Projects, London (2016); *Nanjing International Art Exhibition*, International Expo Centre, Nanjing, China (2014); *Head to Head*, Standpoint Gallery, London, UK (2014); *...the urgent hang around*, Bernier/Eliades Gallery, Athens, Greece (2010); *Classified*, Tate Britain, London (2009); *British Art Show 6*, Touring Exhibition organised by Hayward Gallery, London (2005); *Phillip Allen: Recent Paintings*, PS1 Contemporary Art Centre, Brooklyn, NY (2003).

Coinciding with Phillip Allen: *Deepdrippings*, The Approach will also be presenting
Anthony Iacono: *Night Bonding*, in The Annexe.

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