

## Asemic

20 Nov – 19 Dec 2015 at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery in London, United Kingdom



André Hemer, A Hot Mess #7 (detail), 2015, Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 183.5 x 137.5 cm

Screens radiate in the gloom, pulsing with a strange, ethereal light, forming double cross totems, emanating noise and colour, drawing the eye into their electrical glow. They pulse with vibrations of current flowing through cables and wires as blood pumps through a heart. They are strange, buzzing prophets. Then, light meets light as it crosses the room, finding pale, pastel prints, calm like the sun on a warm, quiet day. Images sit, layered one upon the other, obscuring and revealing in equal quantities, causing the eye to re-focus, trying to discern exactly what is on the edges of sight. Meanwhile, bold, splashy canvases display thick impasto daubs of candy-coloured icing, tricking the eye, daring you to detect where digital and physical images meld and meet. Here, in Asemic (20th of November - 19th of December 2015), artists James Alec Hardy, André Hemer and Hiroshi Tachibana bring together works which, although diverse in execution, speak the same abstract language. The practices of these three artists combine digital with physical, origin with final, playing with distance and intimacy in increasingly intense layers. Their work lies on the hazy borders of the asemic, where abstract forms, shapes and ciphers overlap, a bold visual language that

creates a vacuum of meaning, speaking at once in loaded sentences and not at all.

James Alec Hardy's practice works with and against the obsolescence of technology, converting electronic signals from one device to another. His large-scale mixed media sculptural pieces are often human-sized or bigger. They bring together broadcast monitors and other redundant technology (frequently in a bid to convert from analogue to digital) to create looming and eerie totem-like structures. Their size, he explains, "is scaled to create confrontation and presence," while his choice of materials brings together a complex visual language of video signals, symbols, electrical errors and glitches, and, importantly, noise. By extracting and looping images, Hardy comments on the ever-increasing role of television as depicting 'reality' – then brings us back to its most basic binary elements to create something far more complex than the over-processed images we are usually fed on our screens. "I maintain the idea that reality is simple 'perception management'," he explains, "and I am weary of television media being used to create a 'heightened sensory perception of 'reality'."

An integral part of each piece is the performative aspect, with Hardy using sound as a physical force – as an electronic signal to stimulate video and vice versa. Images compose themselves amongst the noise, an organic and complete system self-generating before our eyes, an animate totem, a resurrected deity, a living, breathing creature composed of the awe-inspiring power of electricity, cables and points of light. If ever God was in the TV, it is here.

Where Hardy shocks with colour, Hiroshi Tachibana draws in our focus with muted pastels and pale hues. What the artists do share, however, is a mutual use of light. For the Tokyo-based artist, light imbues him with the ability to explore time and space. Its ultimate intangibility allows him to "think about the ineffableness of a connection, a relationship, and the influence between people and myself." He begins by loosely tracing photographs, catalogue images and children's drawings onto polyurethane, before transferring them with a gel medium onto canvas. He then carefully builds up layer upon layer to create muted images that have a Gerhard Richter element to them, something of an over-saturated, over-transferred memory that at once embodies a vast build up of visual information, yet appears wan, even washed out or obscured.

Like asemic text then, these images become unreadable, like a primal script, or what the artist refers to as "scribbling with lights or doodling in the air." There is a story behind each and every image, but it is unreadable in the final product, translated to an intangible moment, a feeling of light, an abstracted language. Titles such as *Dream (Letter to Samuel Beckett)* or *Photograph (Frida and Björn)* serve only to tantalise rather than illuminate – like grasping at shafts of sunlight.

Finally, with the works of André Hemer, we are brought back to the raw, vibrant and visceral. Like Hardy and Tachibana, he plays with a clever layering of media to create an interlooping dialogue within his works. "I'm interested in re-materialising contemporary experience, much of which is predicated on digital distribution, exchange, and process," he has said. "Rather than a linear transaction from digital to material I'm interested in playing with transactions that go back and forth." His brightly coloured abstract pieces combine scanned images with physical paint, creating sculpted forms which are then scanned and transferred into digital images, only to be printed back again onto canvas and painted over and over again. His impasto technique gives them a three-dimensional quality, the hand of

the artist present in the thick swirls of paint, but also, more subtly, in the melange of digitally manipulated images with which they are fused. It is this play between traditional and new, digital and physical (or, rather, analogue), two- and three-dimensional, that gives them their complexity. This creates a break with what we expect to see and what we are presented with – a melding of art historical moments into one canvas, rather like the mixing several paints together. “Ultimately the paintings are an amalgamation of media, but very much unified as a painting object,” he has explained.

Indeed, what unifies the works of these three artists is a complex ability to layer and interweave visual references and techniques alongside a conceptual complexity that makes them particularly tantalising. Digital points and nodes send pulses through circuits that feed infinitely into each other – sound creating image creating sound, while layer upon layer of paint simultaneous obscures and reveals complex histories. The physical and digital meet on canvas in a similar self-sustaining loop, noise and sound giving way to pigment, physical and digital, intangible like light. They are visual codes, complex languages that speak in many tongues, discernible to no one ear, but speaking to a greater whole.

## Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

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### Opening hours

Tuesday - Saturday  
From 11am to 6pm







### Captions

1. Hiroshi Tachibana, Photograph (Beckett and Mondrian), Photograph (Toy Horses), Photograph (Funazume Shrine), and Photograph (Uta and Kiki), 2014-15, Gel medium transfer, acrylic and gesso on linen, 122 x 274.3 cm
2. James Alec Hardy, Untitled
3. Hiroshi Tachibana, Five Panels, 2014-15, Gel medium transfer and acrylic on linen, 65.2 x 201.4 cm
4. André Hemer, A Hot Mess #6, 2015, Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 183.5 x 137.5 cm
5. André Hemer, Big Node #20, 2015, Acrylic and pigment on canvas, 120 x 90 cm
6. Hiroshi Tachibana, Photograph (Kahna and Spirit) and Palette (Trace), 2015, Gel medium transfer, acrylic and gesso on linen, 33.3 x 24.2 cm