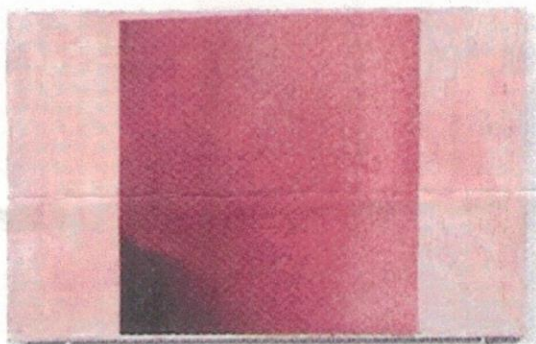


Reviews

Hayley Tompkins



'Motion Picture', gouache on wood, 2008

★★★★★

Drawing Room

Bethnal Green to Hackney

Art

There are well-rehearsed theories that relate fragmentation to the contemporary human condition. When expounding on collage, writers often draw on surrealism's foregrounding of the subconscious, the act of looking in the quick-fire information age or the trauma of a worldview irrevocably transformed by revisions of nuclear and cosmological theories. But on the ground, when encountering art that seems to obscure more than it reveals, we remain divided: there are those who are willing to consider fragments on their own terms and those who will remain forever frustrated at what they feel might be being occluded.

Hayley Tompkins's work continues to produce just such a division in her audience. Her delicate insinuations of imagery never quite declare themselves, demanding to be read as equivocal poetic utterances rather than descriptive passages. However, in this new work, collectively titled 'Re', Tompkins has introduced elements from a less ethereal realm, with wooden tray-like structures proving support for watercolours and photographic fragments. In one piece a real mobile phone is stuck on and the whole structure slathered in silver paint. At the other end of the gallery, a video recorded on the artist's camera-phone – unsurprisingly comprising fragments of interiors, street scenes and other vistas abstracted by the low-resolution technology – intimates an animating causality within the structure of the show itself. Painted twigs accessorised with cut-up photos of house fronts set up similar rhythms between registers of representation; but, while appearing to offer more of a narrative handle on streets and trees and traffic, this gesture even more tantalisingly refuses to assuage demands of disclosure.

Sally O'Reilly