

James Hyde

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Painting interrupts. Its use is to break familiar patterns; to question habits. Within painting is the faith that individual action is relevant and individual feeling is possible. We no longer rely on paintings to provide a view. It is enough to propose techniques and attitudes - the tools for looking in a critical subjective manner.

We don't quite believe photographs are truth - of course we understand how seamlessly images can be manipulated. But, as the ongoing development of digital media tools would indicate, we believe that the camera truly makes images the way we see. How the camera constructs its audience - all of us who cannot look at something without seeing it photographically - is a big topic. It is revealing that photographic looking - a model of looking that proposes a passive, but technically sophisticated eye, so dominates how we believe we see.

I take these photographs myself. I try to keep the subject matter open. Sometimes it's children's toys; full of color, surface and play. Sometimes I photograph places that seem more than half forgotten. Sometimes I chance a picture and maybe figure it out later.

When I paint on the photographs it's in a generic abstract style anchored in the sixties or seventies. This time was the last moment it was possible to believe painting could provide a view as relevant as photographic media.

With these altered photographs I seek to break the relentless transparency of photography. In a sense these works are defacements - graffiti on the photographs. Photography's power relies on denying its surface. A photograph is defaced (or just embarrassed) by a show of surface.

I also wish to break *into* the relentless transparency of photography. Each painted/collaged photograph is an unlikely painting installation. I often feel painting has become an ingratiating blend of design and illustration. At its best painting is an increasingly hermetic language. These works are an attempt to give this language a breather outside itself.

James Hyde, 25/03/2004