



DOCUMENT

Owen Kydd



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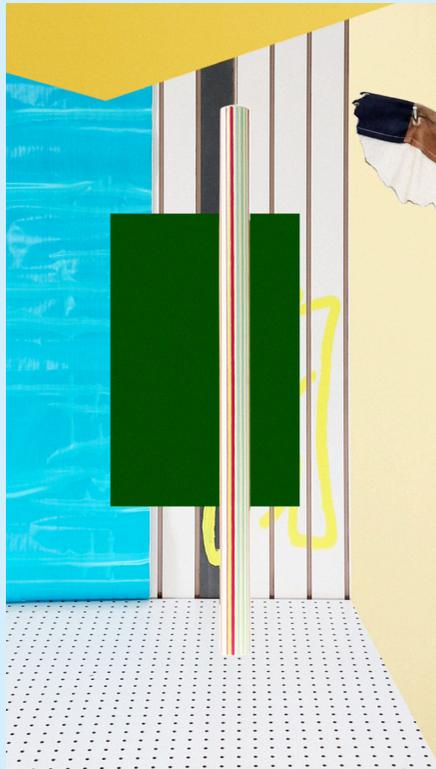
Regular Colors



Owen
Kydd /
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lives and works in Los Angeles. He holds a Bachelor's degree from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and a Masters degree from UCLA. His works have been exhibited in solo exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery and Nicelle Beauchene Gallery in New York, and in group exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, the Surrey Art Gallery, and the Daegu Biennial in South Korea.

As an exploration into the roots of the still image, his practice consists of making durational photographs with video, using images that are filmed from static camera angles and contain subtle evidence of movement. His current body of work looks at retail environments near his studio in Los Angeles.



With the simple flip of a switch on a digital camera, the slide of a button on a smart phone, or the click of an icon switch on a computer, photography and video are allowed to exist interchangeably. Encapsulating the space between these two mediums, Owen Kydd's durational photographs in Regular Colors hover between a still image's instantaneous capture and the expected narrative continuance of video, entering a kind of photographic purgatory that refuses to declare a definite allegiance one way or the other. Unlike a snapshot, no specific time has been extracted from reality; there exists no 'before and after the moment' because 'the moment' never becomes absolute. Seamlessly extended onto vertical screens, this paradox bestows an eerie virtual stillness; its stativity is betrayed only by slight, almost imperceptible changes of light, atmosphere, and camera functions: the exposure value darkens on a photograph of a building, reflections wave and then disappear through triangle glass, a bus passes by in a window, grass shakes in the wind.

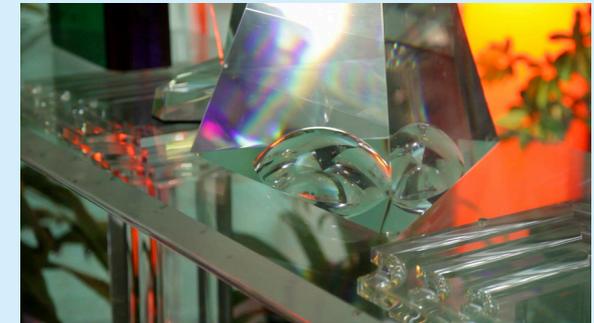
Expanding the duration of a photograph gives a strange sense of time that can feel both real and

illusionary. Photography has maintained a long and complicated relationship between these two poles, but despite consistent challenges to its veracity, a photograph's index arguably corresponds to the moment that the photographer, in the act of taking the photograph, experienced. It is then through mechanical means that photography sets its own temporal rules, which unlike individual perception, become universally standardized. By paralyzing a physical moment to 1/1000th of a second (some higher-end cameras can now even reach upwards of 1/6000th of a second), photographic time becomes displaced from experiential time, slicing so quickly that it is beyond our own comprehension until we review it on our camera's LCD screen.

Even from an exposure with the aperture left open for hours, an immobilized image can only imply a sense of motion. In extending their transfixed states, Kydd's durational photographs exist as an experiential time lost in a photograph's sudden moment, and feels, at least, in tandem with our own internal speed of visual processing (a trait that cinematic technology continually aims to perfect). Rather than extract the singular and indispensable moment, the image is left to perform, leaving the conditions that surround its creation to the experience of the viewer. Encased in thirty-to forty-second sequences, the photographs in Blue Studies and Windows and Walls exist almost as if they are breathing, as if their time continuance could be endless. Not unlike the archetypal street photographer searching for the canonical decisive moment, Kydd wanders L.A. searching for imagery that instead looks as if it might perpetually exist at a near-static state. The movement within the work is slight yet varied enough to force a distinction between the flatness of the screen and the illusion of representational time, deceiving the eye into a momentary spatial depth.

In an assembled composition that mimics a kind of modern trompe l'oeil still life, each fragment that makes up Window Study inhabits its own time signature, effectively continuing the conversation around expanded photography

that first rooted itself in the cinematic. On a perpetual loop, the studio still life as a whole mimics the inanimate state of the video screen itself, creating a plastic transformation that inhabits a kind of sympathetic magic. The materials in Window Study are as synthetic as the medium – a malleable roll of blue reflective paper, for instance, is draped next to mylar balloons that appear to be floating in space above a white-coated pegboard. These objects' new screen-based lives are as deteriorate (if they even degrade at all) while the video, as a data file, defies a physical object's mortality. Kydd utilizes these specific objects and surfaces to reverberate the same kind of plastic quality as the screen they are presented on.



Simultaneously caught between photography's instant capture and video's continuous duration, time on the other side of the screen sits as still as our own bodies, while we hold our breath and investigate the illusion, sensing something could happen at any moment – any hint of a narrative finale, or even an elemental surprise. Kydd's videos never give in; the expected moment never materializes and each image continues, entranced in a prolonged meditation on a photograph that looks as if it has come to life.

- Emily Kay Henson, is an independent arts writer living and working in Chicago, currently holding Fellowships at the Museum of Contemporary Photography and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

Cover / Blue Studies, 2013
Inside L / Window Study, 2013
Inside R / Windows and Walls, 2013