

Abstractionists employ various tactics to transpose creative impulse and thought into imagery with legibility and coherence: chance, deconstructed observation, repetition, systems and intuition are all frequent strategies. Whether through the automation of process or via the seeming absence of a literary narrative, the (erroneous) assumption can be that the artist is recoiling from personal investment, denying the work human intervention. And yet, there is patently no inevitability about the outcome of artworks. The more decision-making is marginalised, the more outlandish or random choices become.

In 1966, George Brecht outlined 'the two aspects of chance' in his essay *Chance-Imagery*, '...one where the origin of images is unknown because it lies in deeper-than-conscious levels of the mind, and the second where images derive from mechanical processes not under the artist's control. Both of these processes have in common a lack of conscious design.' The world's technologies and social structures are far more complex now. To our contemporaries, an inherent comprehension of complexity accords to the acceptance that the removal of subjectivity is futile. It is a glaringly obvious assertion that there is no rational survival function to making art in any form: and yet it is a visceral reflex.

The participating artists of this exhibition, curated by Katie Pratt, are Andrew Bick, Jo Bruton, Clare Goodwin, Lothar Götz, Maria Lalic, Peter Lamb, Angus Pryor and Brandon Taylor. The individual artists in this group each employ varying degrees of intuition counterbalanced with either geometry or chance. They also share a sensitivity to architecture and space.

Abstraction can be an opportunity to extrapolate the simple structures of modern life, either in alternative or simultaneous forms. In 1789, William Blake wrote *The Human Abstract*. To me, reading it in the weeks before a general election, when I hope the politics of the Welfare State will rout the politics of *The Big Society*, I infer an indictment on charity as a vainglorious reflection on the giver, not a sustained liberation of the recipient. This exhibition is a celebration of the generosity of exhibitors – artists with a readiness to share their insight. It is a manifesto for community, education and the social structures that underpin human society.

Katie Pratt 2015

The Human Abstract exhibition private view 22nd May 2015 6.30-8.30pm
Exhibition continues 23rd May – 13th June. Contact gallery for opening times.

The exhibition is accompanied by a discursive event hosted at the University of Gloucestershire on 3rd June 2015.

For further details please see www.thehumanabstraction.wordpress.com or contact kpratt@glos.ac.uk

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