FLORENCE LOEWY
gallery / books

Press release

Pop-Up, Non Pop-Up

Sara MacKillop
From 13 June 2015 to 31 July 2015
Opening date 13 June 2015

Florence Loewy
9/11 rue de Thorigny 75003 Paris
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Press Release

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Mail-order catalogues are fascinating objects. From one page to the next, they seem to tackle the insane task of listing all of the things in this world: practical objects, objects so common that we barely notice them, surprising objects, somewhat shameful objects, connected to all parts of the body, useless gadgets. An inexhaustible source of answers to the consumer needs of modern life, they form an encyclopaedia of the world through its most material aspect.

Sara MacKillop has long been sensitive to the charms of these mildly grotesque inventories. Not lacking in humour, she likes to highlight their paradoxes: part book and part advertising leaflet, catalogues are both ephemeral yet heavy. They are objects that so quickly become obsolete they are barely made to be read. Like Hans-Peter Feldmann in his book Album published in 2008, MacKillop’s gaze lingered on the pages of these catalogues, as though to save them from the oblivion to which their very nature condemns them. The whole art of showcasing ordinary objects is thus revealed: the compositions worked out in detail, attractive colours, and hackneyed sales pitches that are nonetheless consistently repeated: £9.99! But it is above all this infinite and obsessive succession of images of unappealing objects that she isolates in all of their literality. In her work, as in Feldmann’s, we find the same deadpan attachment to the appropriation of images produced within a non-artistic context, but that constitute the representation that our world gives itself.

For her second solo exhibition at Gallery Florence Loewy, Sara MacKillop borrows the form of the pop-up to elevate these catalogue pages to the ranks of sculpture. As she manoeuvres her cutter, items such as pencils, printers and plastic bags appear to recover some of their volume through their detachment from the page. She appropriates the virtuosity that certain masters of the genre have laid claim to, by mischievously making the golden rule of pop-ups her own: that of getting all of one’s paper sculpture out of a single page, with no add-ons. When she scans her images MacKillop deliberately conserves the traces of the texture of the original paper, making use of the poor quality paper and printing of sales catalogues. Hence the Mirrors, reproductions on photographic paper of mirrors from the Argos catalogue, enable the other side of the page to show through in their reflection. Enlarged to the size of the real object, they reveal their dithering – dots or pixels – because MacKillop has since extended this work to the brand’s website, and compares the aesthetic effect obtained by the deformation of the various formats.

If Sara MacKillop demonstrates a predilection for stationary catalogues, it is notably because the shades of colours, the arrangements of pencils, rolls of scotch tape and paper form particularly interesting compositions. The sculpture Pen Fence, a reproduction on cardboard of images of oversized pencils and felt-tip pens, appears to be a standard-bearer for self-fulfilment through creative hobbies whereas in the gallery display window, Marks, a few small traces of coloured felt-tip pens printed onto transparent vinyl, sampled among a catalogue’s colour chart, draw the eye of passers-by like a painter performing colour tests.

Sara MacKillop’s work returns tirelessly to the same elements: stationary items, books and album covers. From these communication tools, she evacuates the discourse and retains only the material. With the same distanciation that we also recognise in the paring down of her artworks and exhibitions, she observes, plays, and cites, encapsulating within her critique both the objects and the strategies used to showcase them. Just as with Gift Wrapping Paper, which would have been a simple ready-made had the artist not patiently re-rolled the whole roll inside out, she invites us to see the “overleaf” of things, precisely where the motif makes way for the material.

Camille Azaïs

Exhibition View

Legend : Exhibition view, Pop-Up, Non Pop-Up, 2015, Florence Loewy, Paris Photo © Aurélien Mole

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