

Robert Pulie

Change Sign

15/11/13 – 07/12/13

The Commercial Gallery, Sydney

In this exhibition of new work, Robert Pulie appropriates selected signs and symbols as typographic details copied from the page, the screen or the portable device.

Here, the change sign on the calculator determining the switch between positive and negative values becomes the inspiration for a series of paintings. These object lessons, as random pictorial solutions, propose a number of variations on the theme: bedding down the concept literally (*Caskets' Central Sheltering*), posing as the sign of the cross (*Christian Science*), or in reference to those ubiquitous emoticons we love to hate (*More Mawkish Kisses*).

In *coppe rart*, Pulie presents the copyright symbol reworked as copper art, crudely (and by inference, somewhat violently) beaten into shape as a most heavy-handed assertion of creative rights. Inspired by a misheard comment from a friend—'You should copper art (copyright) it!'—Pulie enjoys the absurd malapropism, and of what might be conceived of as a particularly Australian take on personalised home décor, retro-1970s suburban style.

'Shooting the breeze' in desultory conversation, as if attending the same party, two versions of a work called *Ditto*, held in suspension like the limbs of a marionette, conjure up a similar sense of referral and deferral. As the signifying marker of repetition, and of all that has been said and done before, the ditto mark is perhaps the ultimate example of dumb type.

In all these works, Pulie's interrogative and characteristically logocentric sense of humour up-ends meaning in the redundant left-over spaces of everyday forms of signification. If art is, by definition, useless and excess to requirements, humbling us with these shy relics of communication overload, then there is much here to articulate the void.

Eve Sullivan, November 2013