Anna Kristensen

Anna Kristensen's painting *Gate* (2016) and *Exit* (2014) are comparable in their 'snapshot' origins and localised specificity. In both artists' works, mimicry is pushed to an extreme verisimilitude, enhanced by the hyperrealism of photographic techniques. These uncanny images are hybrids, they are both a document of the artists' process and a reconstruction of a pre-existing reality. So what is it that we recognise in the scenes chosen by these artists? Demand's pictures are tightly focused indoor settings, almost still-lifes, whereas Kristensen's are set outdoors. In both, the absence of the natural world and people is chillingly emphasised. We are presented with various openings, though the sense of depth is veiled – for instance by a partly drawn blind in *Daily # 16* (2011), opaque frosting on a back-lit window pane in *Daily #14* (2011), or the vent that runs diagonally across a gutter in *Daily #07* (2008). Similarly, Anna Kristensen's painting, *Gate*, shows a vacant block veiled by green shade-mesh, the mesh covering over a chain-link fence which gives its proportions to the entire picture-plane. The mesh is lacerated. Repeated cuts are intended to lessen the force of the wind – these openings evoke the slashed and punctured canvases of Lucio Fontana (1899-1968) – a casually violent reaction against the veiled picture plane.[1] The indications of perspectival depth determine the odd, illusory behaviour of the two panels. Their ambivalent play of proximity and distance draws attention to a surface close at hand, while the view beyond is inferred but blocked – so too, our access to the unreachable space beyond the veil.

In his illuminating essay on *The Dailies*, the American art critic Hal Foster described an occurrence where by 'the thing prevails over the view out'.[2] He referred to two modes of representation common in 17th-century still life and interior painting as treated by Svetlana Alper's book *The Art of Describing* (1982). She considered the Italian model of Alberti, where a picture acts as a *perspectival window* through which we look out onto the world, versus the Dutch model of Kepler, for whom the picture is constituted as a *mirrored reflection* of the world.[3] While 'the first type proposes that the world exists for the viewing subject to command,' Foster argued that 'the second imagines that the representation, even the subject, might not exist at all: it is as if the world simply appears as an image.'[4] In this sense, we are susceptible to an act of looking, which collapses the distinctions between image, maker, and perceiver. Furthermore, the verisimilitude of these pictures is aided by the fact that the consideration of scale is rendered meaningless – in regard to the world outside the frame one measure of scale is as good as any other. All that matters is the internal consistency of scale, the reference points inside the image. Therefore, the edge of the work [*its bracketing frame*] is a catalyst for the transition between real to virtual, and back again.

Oscar Capezio

(from *Out of Place*, exh. cat., Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, 2021, pp18-19.)

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[1] Founder of an Italian avant-garde movement characterised as 'Sapzialismo' (Spatialism). Lucio Fontana broke through the two-dimensionality of painting by puncturing the canvas membrane, his *Cuts* series developed in 1958, established a new spatial and performative antagonism between image and object, artwork and audience.

[2] Hal Foster, 'Dailiness', in *Thomas Demands: The Dailies*, (London: Mack Books, 2015) 7-67.

[3] Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[4] Hal Foster, 'Dailiness', 17.