

Outtakes: Mark Leckey's On Pleasure Bent
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FALSE START #1: Another complication of delight is that it is not the product of a single, imitable idea or gesture; it has no clear lineage and does not organize itself neatly beneath history's narrative arcs.

One has to be charged to reach certain depths, after all, and in a time when many art exhibitions are drily composed like dissertations—the work presented at times like mathematical proofs for *Why This Is Art*—pleasure separates art from chore.

Nothing confounds the art world quite like pleasure. Too much pleasure, and you've got decoration; too little, and you're left with theory. Or something like that. Please is simultaneously dismissed as a lesser experience while revered as the ultimate goal.

Certainly pleasure subverts the idea of a rational intellect, and is too slippery a standard to adhere to rhetorical rigors. Pleasure is an outcome, not a strategy to be parsed, and it is often confused with the puerilities of quirk, cuteness, ease and other contemporary manners of dubious levity. What visual pleasure is, or feels to be, is a defiant state of unreasoned gratification produced in a moment of looking, and counter to its reputation, the experience is imperative for the pleasures of thinking.

(Spoiler alert: there is no guilt in visual pleasure).

There's that word again: *pleasure*. Pleasure confounds and complicates conversations about art. Excessive is frivolous, too little is theory

I won't dwell on the title except to say this: a bent pleasure = a kink in the system.

Keeps the rational thinkers on their toes, and the whirling

For bringing into our conversation the question of *pleasure*, of which there are many to experience. In art that word has been defended and vilified. One side of the playing field boasts that pleasure is the vital life force of art; the other, the antithesis to its potential. Broker a truce between decoration and revolution,

Pleasure may always be a virtue, but that which delivers it may not be virtuous. Pleasure bent, in Britspeak, perverse, wrong. our images are also fooling us. They are not us, they are a fiction of us. One of the show's small, sparkling gems is a poster titled

is taken from the

proves that mere delight enough, though he provides even more than that in the form of visual pleasures. In fact, the freedom inherent in the pleasures of looking, of watching, are.

Icky familiarity—the uncanny of the archivist— is more uncomfortable, less containable. Memory bested, even tricked out of its own mind.

Leckey's desire burrows a wormhole in the image

therefore, they are as much a portrait of us as anything

images and objects and the artist collapse into one another

Piecing together the relics of our time—images, objects, all material—to understand where we are

from images and footages

If ours is an era marked for collapse—dispossessing us as well as our stuff of agency and presence— Leckey seems hell bent to direct our attentions to the new dimensions opening in its wake.

After all, what more or less real in memory—image, experience, or the desire to see both join forces?

British artist Mark Leckey a synthesiac with a penchant for . For this exhibition, His practice seems a system of Some of the narratives are personal:

Leckey's silhouette inside the image.

“Digital technology disappears real world objects by dematerializing them,” Leckey wrote in *The Universal Addressability of Dumb Things*, “or dispossessing them of their shadow, if you like.”

Transmission towers, sunsets 1970s cheese, aural. Debbie Harry (or is it another voice?) singing the “Oo, Oo, Oh Oh” of *Heart of Glass*, a pleasurable haunting of the space.

playing drums, sticking his stick into the hole? Artist,

Rabbit holes of image, fantasy,

Hardlines of memory

that may have been buried or overlooked

Pleasure is indeed bent—perverse, perhaps, but never less pleasing.

Sadly, it can't admire us back.