

Press release
July 2021

Alex Hubbard
The Border, The Ship II

July 24 to August 28, 2021
Opening on Saturday, July 24, 7 to 9 pm
KASTRO, 840 07 Antiparos

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *The Border, The Ship II*, a new video by the American artist Alex Hubbard.

Since the mid-2000s, Alex Hubbard has combined the compositional activity of a painter, a Foley artist's ear for the texture of sound, and an idiosyncratic theater of everyday objects into a sui generis practice that tests the boundaries of painting, film, and performance against one another. Animated by a tension between medium-specificity and its loss, these works are presented as large-scale projections, often in aspect ratios more common to painting than cinema.

In his latest video, *The Border, The Ship II* (2021), Hubbard continues a decade-long move away from the tabletops on which his strange choreography of objects first appeared. Opaque actions—dunking a plastic skeleton in blue paint or hanging a dumbbell from a pulley—have been layered, via digital chroma-keying, in various orientations to create a multi-perspectival “cubist” space. A rat, seen from above, scurries past a profile view of a striped flag quivering in the wind; a t-shaped dolly rolls behind a swatch of shiny orange fabric that paradoxically rests on a perpendicular plane above it. Gravity pulls in every direction while a seamless white backdrop serves ambiguously as both blank surface and indefinite depth. Yet here, as with his earliest videos, Hubbard still proposed something akin to the flatbed picture plane—which is to say, “any receptor surface,” as Leo Steinberg defined the term, “on which information may be received, printed, impressed—whether coherently or in confusion.”

If the slippage between Hubbard's performance behind the camera and the compositional alignment of color and shape it produces on-screen evokes the conditions of painting, his insistence on the rhythmic value of noise (as innocuous as a rattling pipe or squeaky wheel) reminds us that we are watching a time-based art. We might place similar significance on Hubbard's decision to eschew natural sound in favor of a Foley soundtrack whose disjunctive exaggerations emphasize the material presence of each video, unhinging the actions recorded from whatever quasi-narrative one might try to ascertain. Sounds play in reverse. Footsteps reverberate unnaturally as Hubbard walks across the nonspace of his set, and often we are aurally convinced that flows of paint gush with more force than the visual evidence would suggest. At times, sound and gesture even part ways completely—for example, the atmospheric clang of a harbor bell in *The Border, The Ship II*, which relates to the work's title but has no apparent correspondence to the action within the frame.

Hubbard's unraveling of the suture between sound and image, his accenting of the seam between each of his digitally composited camera shots, and his extension of the gap between gestures and their significance again recalls Steinberg's description of the flatbed, an analog of “operational processes” that is beyond “painting as such.” Paint—whether sprayed, poured, or splattered—plays a leading role in *The Border, The Ship II*, but the work isn't “about” the history of painting, nor is it about the history of performance or video art. Rather, in *The Border, The Ship II*, Hubbard borrows aspects of these familiar forms to create a new, hybrid medium marked by provisionality and carefully attuned to the question, What comes next?

Benjamin Carlson

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

Alex Hubbard was born in 1975 in Toledo, OR, US, and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA, US. Hubbard has been the subject of solo exhibitions at museums including the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, MA, US (2014); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, US (2012); The Kitchen, New York, NY, US (2010); and Mercer Union, Toronto, ON, CA (2010). Institutional group exhibitions include *How We Live: Selections from the Marc & Livia Straus Family Collection*, Hudson Valley MOCA, Peekskill, NY, US (2019); *Optik Schröder II*, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, AT (2018); *The Collection*, Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA, US (2018); *Progressive Praxis*, de la Cruz Collection, Miami, FL, US (2017); *Single-Channel Catalyst: Alex Hubbard's 'Eat Your Friends' and Selections from the Collection*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC, US (2016); *America is Hard to See*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, US (2015); *L'Almanach 14*, Le Consortium, Dijon, FR (2014); and *Knight's Move*, SculptureCenter, New York, NY, US (2010).

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