

— Somewhere it's dawn

Tim Thatcher
Erica van Zon

List of works

Foyer

Tim Thatcher
Untitled
Guache on paper

Gallery

Erica van Zon
Fringe 1,
Fringe 2,
Fringe 3,
Need more fire,
Rhythm fringe,
Cotton

Tim Thatcher
Untitled works
Guache on paper

Untitled works
Woodblock collage

Erica van Zon
Chinese charm chain
Plastic chain, wire, trinkets

Beijing childrens characters
Terracotta, acrylic, enamel

Tim Thatcher
Untitled
Woodblock collage

_ Somewhere it's dawn

On first glance there appears to be an aesthetic disconnect between the work of Tim Thatcher and that of Erica van Zon, Thatcher's post minimalism has a coolness that is certainly not present in van Zon's post pop approach but both are clearly colourists with a love of vibrant intensity, albeit more restrained in the work of Thatcher. Both artists also have a similar attitude to the traditions of their chosen craft. While these works have a sense of the hand-crafted in them this is engaged with a healthy disrespect. Thatcher plays with the illustrative by using guache and woodblock printing to construct his narratives, however his use of media connects these works more to colour field painting and the work of metaphysical painters than to illustration. van Zon also uses the materials of traditional craft such as clay and embroidery thread, however she too rejects the conventions of their use in preference of a more playful approach to object making.

The works in this show engage a sense of failed utopias, in both artists' works the unwinding of a philosophical age is evident. Thatcher creates pictures of imagined minimalist sculptures located in domestic scenes, their idealised austerity arguably representing the endgame of high modernism where formal visual investigation has become a commodified trope. In contrast van Zon creates works that engage the now ubiquitous world of Chinese pop. These works, produced during a residency in Beijing, speak of communism in Post-Maoist China and the return to over 3500 years history of market capitalism. Perhaps more correctly, through their use of the everyday materials of China, they show that Chinese culture still has its roots in the China that preceded 61 years of state communism. As with any aesthetic that is so young there is always an afterimage of what came before. However Thatcher and van Zon are not oppressed by the weight of such historic ideals, in a world that has given up its meta-narratives as lost causes and where ideals are bought and sold as décor de jour. These two artists use a light touch and a wry smile to open a space where we might ask what comes next. Somewhere it's the dawn of a new era ... or perhaps the dawn of a recycled one.

Exhibition

10–26 May

The Engine Room

A Massey University
School of Fine Arts
Litmus Research Initiative

Location

East End Block 1,
Massey University Wellington,
63 Wallace Street,
Entrance C

Gallery hours

Tuesday–Saturday
12–4 pm

Contact

Ilka Kapica, Administrator
T 04 801 5799 ext 62337

Website

theengineerroom.org.nz

Twitter

@theengineerroomnz