

these interiors starts to pull the exhibition together what on first impression had felt disjointed and too serial. I would not say this was Isidro Blasco's best show; however, devoid of the spectacular of his mid- and large-scaled works it pushed viewers into new modes of engaging with his work. It had surprising results that were equally laudable.

Gina Fairley

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Kylie Stillman at Utopia Art

In a world struggling with the longevity of the printed word, Kylie Stillman's sculptures bring renewed life to those pages past. Stacks of books lined the walls of Utopia Art Sydney, hovering in clusters chest high. The titles were not important. This was not another clever pun added to the lineage of artists who have used text. Rather Stillman took to her found materials with a scalpel, the delicate brutality of her language more aligned with the painted gesture.

Titled *The Perversity of Purpose*, this exhibition was an erudite study in scale that moved between the intimate and the spectacular. Everyday objects took on the monumentality reserved for great sculpture with Stillman's impressive *Cypress Pine* (2012), comprised of 201 stacked and carved fence palings, to the quirky and obsessive with her introspective scalpel scribbles and landscape constructed from ballpoint pens, *You Yangs* (2013).

One sensed that Stillman was challenging herself with this exhibition, trying to free up the formalism of her chosen technique and her characteristic organic subject matter. This was best demonstrated by a 12 small book stacks, their titles—*The Scribble, The Scrawl, The Stroke, The Swirl, The Weave*—allude to the abstracted mark. One can't fault these sculptures. They are exquisitely crafted and presented.

Her installation *The Purpose of Purposeful Repur-*



Kylie Stillman, *Cypress Pine*, 2012, 201 fence palings, 125 x 80 x 21 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Utopia Art Sydney.

posing (2013), however, was as confused as its title. Playing upon the idea of the flat pack, this room-within-a-room constructed from standard sheet plywood and housing a chair and column of books was conceptually thin. It fluttered within ideas of framing, illusion, and real space, without really moving beyond the structural confines of this installation.

It confirmed the strength of *Cypress Pine* (2012) sitting at the opposite end of the gallery. It was the first piece made in this body of work and indeed greeted visitors with its verso, a wall of timber slats in their splendid banality. Moving around it and into a spatial engagement with Stillman's exhibition offered kind of dimensional flip.

Writer Chloe Watson describes it as 'reverse *trompe l'oeil*.' Faced by this 'dimensional illustration'—shall we call it—a tree's branches reach beyond the field of the palings. Watson continues, "it demonstrates how Stillman is 'already toying with fragmentation or breaking down form' ... encouraging us to [move] beyond the figurative and the literal."

This was a very clean show, superbly crafted and presented. The craftiness and obsession of Stillman's making permeated the viewing experience,

our senses heightened with the neatness and clarity of incision and, yet, it was this materiality that relaxed the viewer through familiarity. Is it too quirky? The quality of these works far supersedes the gimmick.

Gina Fairley

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ENGLAND

London

Katsuhiro Yamaguchi and Yuko Shiraishi at Annelly Juda Fine Art

This autumn, Annelly Juda Fine Art presents the work of two Japanese artists, Katsuhiro Yamaguchi (b.1928) and Yuko Shiraishi (b.1956). The first boasts a career that stretches over the past six decades, and has its origins in the pioneering Experimental Workshop (*Jikken Kobo*). The second is a much younger contemporary artist, born in Tokyo, but now living in London, having trained at the Chelsea School of Art. This London gallery, which represents a number of Japanese artists (including Yoshikuni Iida, Kazuo Shiraga, Katsura Funakoshi, Tadashi Kawamata, and

Yoshige Saito) presents the work of Yamaguchi and Shiraishi on different levels of its building, as two separate exhibitions; yet, the decision to open *Katsubiro Yamaguchi: Imaginarium* and *Yuko Shiraishi: Signal* concurrently cannot have been entirely arbitrary. The juxtaposition is interesting on a purely visual level, but one wonders whether they really complement each other in any other than a superficial way.

Imaginarium features a broad range of Yamaguchi's sculptural and multi-media works, including light vitrines, cloth pieces, magnet reliefs, Plexiglas mobiles, videos, and photographs, and even two early paintings in a Rayonist style. In *Signal*, Shiraishi is represented by an installation and eight color-field paintings. Already, then, the former is coming across as a much more versatile figure who, along with other members of Experimental Workshop throughout the 1950s, took it as a mission to incorporate new media and technologies, not only in the visual arts, but also in music, dance, and theater, with a view to fostering other modes of engagement between artworks and their audience. By contrast with the techno-scientific futurism of Yamaguchi's output, Shiraishi's work appears outside the present moment, and uninfluenced by what is going on around it; working alone rather than as part of a collective, she produces works of a highly personal kind, taking her inspiration from remote antiquity, and dabbling in what appears to be 'New-Age' mysticism, replete with references to Egyptian mythology, astrology, and the afterlife.

Having said that, it would seem that the organizers of these two shows intended for us to draw certain connections, or pull out some common threads. Upon entering the gallery containing Shiraishi's work, what we encounter first are the oil paintings from her series titled *Signal (1-8)*. These feature configurations of differently