this is tomorrow
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Chisenhale Gallery, 64 Chisenhale Road, London E3 5QZ

Yuri Pattison: user, space

Title : Yuri Pattison, user, space (2016). Installation view, Chisenhale Gallery, 2016. Commissioned by Chisenhale Gallery, London. Courtesy of the artist; mother's tankstation limited, Dublin; Helga Maria Klosterfelde, Berlin; and Labor, Mexico.
Website : http://chisenhale.org.uk/
Credit : Photograph Andy Keate

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Chisenhale Gallery
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Review by William Rees

A conversation recently featured on digital platform DIS between Armen Avanessian and Suhail Malik makes the case for our post-contemporary society. No longer do linear models of time stand up against our experience of the world. A world increasingly medi-ated through systems that pre-empt our thoughts and actions based on past behaviour, ranging from the seemingly benevolent (targeted advertising) to the sinister (pre-emptive strikes). Many of these concepts first appeared in science fiction; now life is imitating art, and in many ways surpassing it.

Yuri Pattison's practice similarly questions the pervasive and invasive nature of modern tech-nology. The result of his 18-month Create residency, during which he worked within London's Silicon Roundabout, 'user, space' replicates a communal workspace one might expect to find within the start-up culture of the tech industry. A long table surrounded by Ikea-style chairs runs through the centre of the gallery, while in one corner, a separate environment for relaxing houses oversized cushions and shelves of plants. And everywhere, there is the physical manifes-tation of tech: wires, adapters, servers, computers, and cameras, all of which create a cacophony of noise that hums throughout the installation.

A critique commonly levelled at Pattison and his peers is that, by working within a visual language that is so close to that which they are trying to imitate, they are evading criticality by merely holding a mirror up to society. However, while 'user, space' certainly replicates the

aesthetic of those workspaces, one cannot help but feel that the installation is critical of the intentions behind them. In calling into question the reasoning behind why certain design tropes persist over others, Pattison suggests that this is because of the ideologies they represent. For example, interiors from science fiction come to represent the ideals of their depicted utopias, whilst past speculative design aesthetics are used to promote ideals of transparency and progressiveness. However, in this hybrid space that appears to be for working, socialising, and relaxing, we are confronted with the stark reality that all of our time is being increasingly colonised for productivity.

This re-categorisation of time and the confusion that comes from it, is key to his critique. LED and natural light sources in the gallery are controlled by a computer system programmed by Pattison, speeding up the natural cycles of day and night to the point at which they are completely abstracted. Technology is not only disrupting how we organise our time but the natural order of time itself.

Along one wall of the gallery are shelving units similar to those used in Amazon warehouses. Amazon packing material can be found around the space, while a multi-screen video work shows glimpses of their warehouses and packing lines. Amazon and other retailers' use of targeted advertising and suggested purchases is one example of the post-contemporary state outlined by Avanessian and Malik. Though some suggest these pre-emptive models should be seen as helpful and time saving, others argue that such coercion represents a form of soft bio-politics. The video installation also guides the viewer on an uncanny tour through various architectural renders of other workspaces and housing projects. Upon closer inspection, all of the views are slightly abstracted (in one office, we glide along the exposed ceiling) and this, along with the absence of people in these visualisations, calls attention to the state of limbo they occupy in relation to their finished product. Pattison's demystification of these models raises interesting questions surrounding the relationship between desire and profit, perhaps asking whether these desires were really ours to begin with.

With 'user, space', Pattison has created an eerie installation that appears in a similarly suspended state, like a render waiting to be realised. Though his work highlights the role of technology in the post-contemporary, it also aims to uncover for the viewer the dual and sometimes disingenuous intentions behind many of the systems that constitute it.

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