

Aidan Kelly Murphy, Lee Kit 'Banal' Review, this is tomorrow, 24 January 2019

this is tomorrow

Contemporary Art Magazine

mother's tankstation, 41- 43 Watling Street, Usher's Island, Dublin, D08 NP48, Ireland

Lee Kit: Banal



Artist : Lee Kit Banal Installation view 2018

Title : 7. lee kit banal installation view courtesy the artist and mothers tankstation dublin london

Website : <http://www.motherstankstation.com/>

Credit : Courtesy the artist and mother's tankstation Dublin | London

Lee Kit: Banal

mother's tankstation

29 November 2018 - 26 January 2019

Review by Aidan Kelly Murphy

As you enter Dublin's mother's tankstation and Lee Kit's 'Banal' you are greeted by Gnarls Barkley's 2006 hit song 'Crazy'. A search for the source of 'I think you're crazy' (2017) reveals a pair of headphones overhead, dangled upside down and tantalisingly out of reach - and out of use. On the wall Kit has, through a plastic storage container, projected a video that has some of the song's lyrics overlaid, with others missing. This front gallery, which serves as the foyer to each of the gallery's exhibitions, often sets the tone for things to come; and taking this as a departure point, things are not quite as they seem. 'Crazy' continues to reverberate through the space as you approach the first in a series of canvases, '(Talk about ___ again and again.)' (2018). On closer inspection you find they are not made out of traditional fabric, but are instead folded cardboard that has been finished with other non-traditional art materials, including inkjet ink and emulsion paint. This combination of unorthodox media highlights the role, through crafting and exhibiting, that art plays in elevating the everyday, the banal, into 'art objects'.

Kit makes a striking architectural imprint in 'Banal', constructing an L-shaped wall in the centre of the main gallery space. This single wall is fabricated and placed in such a fashion as to create a defined narrative flow through the gallery, one which controls the order that the work is revealed to the audience. Kit uses this wall to manufacture space and subsequently move the viewer through it, revealing and concealing at each stage. As you turn into the main space you glimpse, through a gap that has been carefully left between the permanent and interim infrastructure, the end of your impending journey. Once you have reached the end,

Kit draws you back to this gap by lighting 'The surface of a mirror' (2018) using a lamp hanging on the adjacent wall. This manufactured vista adds an additional element of performance to 'Banal', with Kit using absence (the gap in the wall) to denote presence (the view).

With its central and large, glass roof pitch, exhibitions in mother's tankstation benefit from an abundance of natural light. In the shorter winter period they are transformed by the reduced availability of sunlight during gallery hours. Kit utilises this and it plays a primary role in 'Banal'. Post-sunset the work morphs and reveals seemingly hidden elements. During the day the audience can freely approach the projections, but after dusk their proximity casts a shadow, and you find yourself consciously aware of your own presence. Text fades from works and colours change tint, with the biggest alteration coming in the form of the projections that emerge from the background to the foreground. One of the most striking reveals comes from 'Blue skies and clear' (2018), which during the day is a single projection, but at night becomes a dual presentation as Kit reflects an inverted version of the piece on the opposite wall. The polarity of the show is epitomised here, day/night, absence/presence, real/fabricated; Kit plays them off each other, highlighting the affect the viewer's interpretation has on the works.

As you walk around the exhibition it's hard not to think of Koons' 'Banality' series due to Kit's title choice. Whereas Koons enlarged and reproduced familiar imagery to surprise and at times shock his audience, Kit takes a different route. He employs familiar, but at times unexceptional, objects, elevating them out of the banal through their reconfiguration and presentation in the space. As a result of their conglomeration Kit places a function on these objects, providing them with an assigned role, and with this we are provided with a platform for engagement, and escape.

Published on 24 January 2019