

Merrigan, James, *Lee Kit, Porn*, mother's tankstation, Dublin, Merrigan Substack, 10 May 2025

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MERRIGAN

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If gravity—the burden of gravity, the burden of the world on one's shoulder—is the tone of *Staying with the Trouble* at IMMA, the opposite can be said of Lee Kit's *Porn*.

Contra the atlas-bearing artists at IMMA, just up the road at mother's tankstation Dublin, we don't get a group exhibition dissolving Individual potency under the curatorial prescription of collectivity; we get a solo exhibition fully embracing masturbatory catharsis via sublime normalcy.

In a word, *Porn*.

The word *Porn* itself seems too explicit in the naming of a contemporary art exhibition, especially in a concept-driven gallery like Mother's.

Usually self-conscious and pious about word-positing and word play, *Porn*'s press-release, presumably written by Kit, is shaved of the academic length, referential breadth and the endnotes of previous press releases penned by the gallery.

All we are given is a paragraph, something akin to a diary entry, or a thought experiment by an academic who has given up on theory and gone rogue. What remains is feeling, injected with wet abjection, that cures the cottonmouth of the usually didactic lecture-performances that pervade artwork labelling elsewhere (up the road).

Porn, a word intimately connected with adolescent men, intimates masturbatory processes and “sticky fingers”, as Lee Kit scrawls in one of his lethargic, clichéd texts that inscribe paintings, video, t-shirts hanging on clothes horses in a sun-kissed gallery.

Textures are modified by the light with softcore not hardcore sensory outputs. Tamed of all its perversion and desperation, *Porn* parallels a Jack Pierson textual romance; or the type of romance that emerges after the exhaustion of an orgasm.

Kit's images of clouds, bearing words to become throwaway lines, thrust skyward like an erect rocket ship in the process of jettisoning its parts towards impotency.

In situ, I imagine arriving at Mother's as daylight approaches, the same pink that crests the clouds outside crests the gallery inside: private and public become violently indivisible.

There is a lot of light here, and the implication of more light to come. And that light, soft light, further dispossesses everything of gravity, angle and heft. There's a kind of disembodiment taking place with objects and words. The graduated paintings, with eczema blemishes of texture peaking through clouds, fall away at the edges, sided as they are with slivers of mirror.

This disembodiment of the artwork of its commodity sovereignty against a blank white wall, and unburdened of its materialist gravity as an artwork burdened by context and meaning, continues with the clothes horses, which suggest something outside themselves, like a slight breeze or the sun radiating warmth.

An unsolicited “€50 each” by the gallery attendant makes me touch ground again; yet also adds to the intrigue, as if reminding me that this is not all ethereal and experiential, but a business.



The backdrop of thin strips upon strips of glistening sellotape—simulating the way light hits the ocean at high noon—is ad hoc enough to imply a tautological poor man's povera, and perhaps warrants the €50 per t.

And then there's the music. Jazz of some sort, 1970's bop-oriented jazz that elevates the tone with a hopscotch of jeopardy as if speaking in sax: *if you fly too high* — you know the rest...while dragging the eyes and ears to the floor from where the sound bops from a projector, no more, no less.

In a way, the words, the paintings, the clothes horses could blow away and no one would pay any mind. But the propaganda of art language is not so strong or hot to obfuscate. This is more of a mirage of feelings, feeling being something that people remember above ideas.