

***Incidentally* at The Nunnery Gallery,
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Incidentally brings together the work of two artists, Joan Key and Yvonne Lammerich, who each inhabit a rich borderline between restraint and sensuality. An intellectual precision, never far from the root of the work in each case, is never allowed to smother the indeterminacy inherent in the fugitive materiality that is engaged in their respective approaches. This is clearly brought out in Sotiris Kyriacou's attentive curation of these two artists, allowing a real dialogue (so often given lip service in such exhibitions) to emerge from the interaction and juxtaposition of the work installed in London's Nunnery Gallery in Bow. The Nunnery has long been the focus of some interesting curatorial initiatives, both artist-led and otherwise – as in this case. It is not an easy space; existing as it does in the 'artists quarter' of the East-end, it also houses a working studio block, and the gallery spaces themselves, although autonomous from the studios, still have the feel of interconnection as a working space. This 'working' context suits the juxtaposition of the works of Key and Lammerich, and actually helps reveal this sense of how a dialogue between work is actually constructed. It consists of three spaces: a medium-sized first gallery, a corridor space, and a large back gallery. One striking aspect of how Kyriacou and the artists have articulated the space is in the very sense of how these works 'face' each other, with their intellectual rigour never becoming closed down but rather, on the contrary, inviting a conversation.

Both Key and Lammerich have substantial exhibiting practices behind them. They are also each involved in writing about art, and through this, keenly interested in the relationship between objects, words and discourses. Perception, the spatial and semantic 'address' of the physical object, together with the misfit that occurs between language usage and the visual proposition, lies at the heart of their practices. What is the relationship between the structures of language, thought and visual perception? These works don't provide any crass answers to such problems, (a rich vein in fact, that runs through modernism to the present day) but allow such issues simply to become part and parcel of the material reality, and the space, of a given work. However it is wrong, as Kyriacou's project shows, to simply conflate these

artists as I have just done here. There are marked contrasts in how they articulate these concerns as well as clear overlaps. We could say that they confront these issues from different vantage points; in the sense that while both use an expanded or exploratory use of medium, Key comes from the position of painting, while Lammerich that of sculpture (in its broadest sense). This difference is laid out in the first gallery with Key's shelf painting (*Pieces of Paper* 2010) with its pale, ephemeral sensation of yellow lines reminiscent of lined writing paper. This extremely delicate optical surface is contrasted by the physicality of the wooden support/object, which is exposed at edges, creating either vertical or horizontal borders that are as crucial to the pieces as the applied painted surface itself. The shelf locates these objects as a collection, lending an air of informality to the slow construction of their sense of 'thingness'. *Aleatoric Process (no.5* 2010) a diptych on two panels might be seen to explore similar concerns, except larger and more irregular. A relationship between symmetry and asymmetry is explored, with the colour turned up slightly. Key's choice of yellows in her work exemplifies the relationship between colour as both relational and yet also operating as an external impact or interruption to surface, as in hazard markings or signs in the everyday environment. The overall effect of *Aleatoric...* is that of a graphic score – a notation (relevant to Key's experiments in this direction with notation for musical performance) that brings to mind something like Earle Brown's *Four Systems* (1954) but more persistent in its nuanced visuality.

If these works imply the open gesture of invitation – whether that of a surface awaiting to be written on, or a score to be interpreted (the possibility of creative openness), Lammerich's piece in the same room explores the opposite: that of finding an image which acts as a generative notation for a specific piece to be formed. She does this in *Abitation* (2008) where a drawing from the 17th century by Samuel Champlain of a fort in Quebec City acts as a template for a construction in real space. What interested Lammerich here was the quasi-medieval space – early Sieneese almost – that is articulated by the drawing. As a model of space it does not translate into three dimensions very comfortably, but this is exactly what informs the piece. The frontality of the work, in its sculptural reconstruction, is demarcated by being painted white, with the 'back' of the drawing (that which is unseen by the viewer facing it – a situation that fascinated French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty) is left as simply the raw materials of MDF. In *Words* (2010) Lammerich presents a condensed, concentrated material residue – like paint

or toothpaste – squeezed out into a neatly contained flowing quasi-writing, and these object are then, in turn, used in a video *Words into Play* (2010) that, from a fixed overlooking camera angle, capture their systematic interaction with an electronic roll-out piano. This summarises the artist's approach to what we might call 'experimental translation': where an object or artefact is embroiled in a generative play that produces another. In the back gallery Lammerich exhibited a larger installation, which consisted of a mirrored pillar surrounded by site-lines marked on the wall, simultaneously suggesting an ideal viewing position and yet undermining the possibility of any privileged one. This was also accentuated by two target paintings whose concentric rings, rather than focusing a point become ethereal through their iridescent, optical and insistent material surfaces. Also in this room, Joan Key's contribution, by contrast, consisted of small and yet intense paintings placed close to the floor. While Lammerich produces formal doppelgangers exploring the translatability of materials and processes, Key's thinking is predominately about surface, plane and event, as exemplified in a triptych *Three Orange Clous* (2009). This was installed asymmetrically in a corner of the middle gallery, accentuating the uncontained quality of its colour – a painterly volume that optically creates a visual ebb and flow; a situation where the colour asserts itself as both material and immaterial at the same time. *Incidentally* explored these subtle interceptions as a delicate boundary between two artists committed to the expansive dimension of what might be seen as minimal means.