

FAIRWAYS & FAST CARS

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'Droll thing life is - "that mysterious arrangement of merciless logic for a futile purpose. The most you can hope for it is some knowledge of yourself - "that comes too late - "a crop of inextinguishable regret.'
- **Joseph Conrad - Heart of Darkness**

For several years now, Adrian Jackman's paintings have been subtly persuading viewers into consideration of various troubled tokens closely aligned with modern[ist] prestige; from golfing fairways and fast cars to computer gaming and more recently, industrial architecture. Reflecting an ongoing investigation into substratum of the aforementioned touchstones, it is a Conradian approach to representation which for Jackman marks a point of difference between his work and the [dominant] landscape oriented typology of most New Zealand art. If it is correct that the best art is by necessity incapable of conclusive opinion, then painting nowadays is firmly seated in Conrad's boat. Indeed, H.L. Mencken noted of *Heart of Darkness* that central to Conrad's argument was the non-determinant dimension of his protagonist.

Jackman's most recent work draws upon a polyvalent approach to personal recollection through the use of stock photographic footage. With his deconstructive yet imaginative approach to visual narrative, Jackman has carefully developed a reductive drawing procedure appropriate for one who has come of age and spent his journeyman years, like many, involved with and observant of the gradual developments in digital imaging. In a process utilizing the technical facility of digitally sourcing and photocopying to degrade any superfluous aspects of an image, Jackman intends painting to enter into the structural remains of photographic space, much like the era of computer gaming technologies he grew up with.

'The revolt of represented things - "will this be a world without mirror, without theater and without painting?"

No and Yes. What is in question is the surface of separation, the limit formed by the screen of painting or surrounded by the scene's frame.' - **Lyotard**. In discussing the monochromatic 60's and 70's work of Jacques Monory, Lyotard elucidated not only the position of his charge in relation to modernism but also Monory's position within a much older trajectory; the history of painting and it's primary agent, symbolic realism. Symbolism and libidinal tension are the constituents which can be perceived in Monory's [and Jackman's] work; in Jackman's instance offering an updated approach to dealing with representational content suggestive of capitalism, current affairs and the personal.

Freed of baroque ornamentation, the development of recent drawing based practices utilizing the reductive properties of pixel surgery and photocopying, provides an interesting contrast and parallel position to the early deconstructive approaches employed prior to many modern advances in imaging [photography, video and digital media]. For Jackman the historical models of other painterly 'surgeons', for instance Cezanne and Matisse, are never out of range. Given the rapid changes of temperature that art has been subject to during the last two decades, it is interesting to observe here that the old role of painter is one which continues to offer new potential in the continual revision of discourse.

For Jackman, painting offers a journalistic yet personal negotiation of the liminal territory his muse [the limit/s of modernism] occupies. Locally, although much could be made of the possibility of a local reading into the subject of Jackman's work, especially given New Zealand's position as emerging middle class emeritus of the British Commonwealth, ultimately it is as part of a more global socialist-type aesthetic critique prevalent in contemporary art that Jackman's work is engaged.