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“Someone Else’s Life”

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01.14.11-02.19.11 *Kerlin Gallery*

Without a certain lightness of curatorial touch, group shows risk imposing meaning on artworks through juxtaposition. Context and adjacency have distorting powers, and yet, at their best, multi-artist exhibitions enhance and illuminate aspects that may otherwise have remained unconsidered. “Someone Else’s Life” evidences this subtle touch. In a finely balanced installation, no single work dominates, and it says a great deal for the quiet strength of Callum Innes’s paintings that they hold their ground against Siobhán Hapaska’s creation: a steel and fiberglass construction wrapped with deerskin and glowing with an unsettling light component. The latter work—*Tick*, 2009—is part weird parasite and part bastard offspring of a coupling between industry and nature. It represents the culmination of a trend in Hapaska’s work, which has seen her smooth and sleek fiberglass forms begin to sprout and grow, their suppressed energy erupting with unexpected accretions.

While narratives and connections have not been curatorially imposed, the human mind has a natural tendency to seek them nonetheless. Standing beneath Liam Gillick’s suspended *Registered Expansion*, 2010, one can see that the sense of how color and geometry can inflect mood and feeling is echoed by the planes of Innes’s *Two Identified Forms*, 2005. There, the imposition of a pair of vertical creamy gold lines on the black-painted surfaces of the canvas insistently but gently disrupts the viewer’s sense of space. This presence of line can also be seen embodied in the vertical movement created by cacti in Jaki Irvine’s LightJet print *Desert Vultures*, 2008. Meanwhile, Irvine’s short jewel of a film *Guanajuato 14*, 2010, shows a hummingbird drinking from a red plastic water container on a balcony in Mexico City. With the same deft lightness of touch that characterizes this whole exhibition, the piece resonates with the power of a moment of stillness against the frenetic movement of life.