

Chris Bond: *Watchers*

30 July - 22 August 2009

'Watchers' is an exhibition of small paintings and sculptures that collectively profile the seductive power of the screen. Television, computer games and mobile technologies provide us with many opportunities for immersive escapism, turning children into transfixed zombies, and adults into nimble-fingered remote junkies.

*Rather than providing comment and opinion on this growing phenomenon, this exhibition uses it for aesthetic fodder. In *Watchers* I've carved up the bland world of the television remote control into jaggy, painted miniature sculptures, and captured the absorbed expressions of TV-watching children in a series of paintings.*

Inspiration for these works began in the home, from the countless hours spent on the couch next to my son, escaping into fantastic worlds full of mind-numbing amusement, and from observing other families sharing the same passion.

Using the lowest quality setting on my mobile phone, I began by making videos of children in side-profile gazing at TV, later breaking them down in the computer into single frames, and selecting the image of maximum child-technology absorption as the basis for a painting that picks up on the strange saturation/pixilation quirks of the video. The distant, slightly hazy quality of the paintings counterpoints the intensity of the subjects' locked-in gaze.

The sculptures followed a different path of development. Initially I intended to replicate the aesthetics of existing TV remote controls out of balsa wood and reconfigure the text and buttons. It was a technical and conceptual failure, and out of frustration I started to randomly hack angles out of remote control proportioned lengths of balsa, carving out sections that resembled jagged hills and valleys. To some I added carved power buttons and infra-red sensors. The grain of the balsa was filled and sanded to resemble plastic, then painted over with colours and patterns inspired by contemporary military camouflage colours and patterns. Despite their divergence from their original source, these objects retain a functional aesthetic. - Chris Bond

For images and further information please contact
olivia@helliecastangallery.com

