

Montierbar  
Realf Heygate

springseason

June 5th 2021 - June 26th 2021



Montierbar is an act of movement. Realf Heygate takes a quietly disruptive position of showing distinct clichés from a long art history in a way that could only be made now. The paintings begin with renders of these artefacts, coming from a database almost as big as the real-world museums in which the original artworks sit. They are digitally composed within springseason and rendered hyper-reflective to mirror the site in which they now 'exist'. A virtual show of impossible objects is consolidated in software but then made physical. Heygate uses these images captured from computer generated material as the basis for the suite of paintings.

The paintings mark a final moment for material that has been moving from site to surface for a long time. The sculptures referenced in the paintings have been reproduced in print, pixel and film for years - passing through websites, pages, postcards and magazines, only to be extracted once more and digitally placed within springseason.

The paintings use these artefacts as signifiers pointing us toward a difficult position where we feel the digital and physical are still distinctly separate yet entirely cohabited. Heygate takes canonic sculptures that exemplify the history of the human hand and reproduces their digitally rendered forms - not the original objects. The paintings are depictions of renders, not of physical artefacts. They therefore work in opposition to their subjects. The arduous process of digitally archiving objects into databases has rendered them safe, accessible and permanent - and Heygate's paintings are images of these. Artefacts enter one side of this archival process and these paintings exist as results on the other.

The cyanotypes work to consolidate this. These camera-less images - not dissimilar to that of rendering software - shift our attention away from the skill and labour of painting and instead speak of material production and its relationship to the digital/physical dichotomy. The paintings are generated through a thousand precise gestures, whereas the prints occur almost involuntarily in a single moment. We end up with two very different types of image both working in unison to configure what we can do with digital material and how it can exist in the economy of the living. Perhaps even they argue that digital can be as corporal as clay, bronze and stone.

Realf Heygate (1994) was born in Leicester and lives and works in London.