

Susan Hobbs

Kevin Yates

31 October to 12 December 2009



Kevin Yates: *Farmhouse* 2009, edition of 2, bronze, painted wood, 33 x 38 x 25 cm

Despite its diminutive size, the miniature is a powerful object. As Susan Stewart writes in her seminal book *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, “The reduction in scale which the miniature presents skews the time and space relations of the everyday life world, and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its ‘use value’ transformed into the infinite time of reverie.” In other words, the miniature is a projection of the everyday, but the absence of a substantial physical space creates a psychological one, invoking the imaginary. Held within the miniature are seemingly infinite but opposing concepts of time: moving in closer and closer, exponential levels of detail reveal painstaking, laboured processes and affirm its verisimilitude, but the object itself consistently suspends perceptions of “real world” time. In Kevin Yates’ sculptural practice, he too uses the miniature as a way of exercising his flawless technical skill while also to create scenarios that allude to specific psychological states.

Working with typical models from railroad building catalogues, Yates resurrects particular examples of vernacular architecture, based on recollections of certain houses and neighbourhoods in which the artist has lived. Yates has painstakingly sculpted each building as a mirrored reflection of itself along a horizontal axis. In doing so, each miniature becomes a hermetic prism that obfuscates any mental projection into the tiny world held within, which only heightens the suspense, concealing “the promise of an infinitely profound interiority” that Stewart describes. Positioned in intervals along the gallery walls, together these houses form a deserted community, suspended in the apparent aftermath of a flood. Yates’ affiliation with disaster scenarios—a notable theme from his last solo exhibition at Susan Hobbs, *HOT HAIL*—point to topical issues relating to politics in certain disaster zones, as well as consequences of a perilous world climate, but aligning with his influences David Lynch and Alfred Hitchcock, these abandoned homes, with their interiors hidden from view, suggest something more sinister. He says, “Both Hitchcock and Lynch choose not to reveal everything in their films. There’s room to daydream and fall into them. I am attempting to find an equivalent to that in my sculpture.”

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