

LAST CHANCE: SLOW LIFE AT APT GALLERY, DEPTFORD

'Slow Life' gathers works by seven artists who share a common interest in the centrality of technology in contemporary life, from digital and online culture to consumer durables, mass production and even the spectacle of space exploration. Linking the very different practices on display is a concern with the phenomenology of technology, its effects on our cognitive and perceptual faculties, and - as the show's title would suggest - on our perception of time.

Ryota Kuwakubo's 'Prepared Radios' (2006) are electronically adapted to filter all vowel sounds from the broadcast, leaving only consonants to pepper the airwaves. While this piece offers respite from an excess of information, it also suggests the kind of fascination with the obsolete - consumer durables that have endured - that so appealed to the Surrealists, a point reinforced by the radios' handcrafted manufacture. Both Mark Karasick and Wilfrid Almendra share this interest in the handmade. The latter's 'Handcrafted Pickaxe' and 'Handcrafted Trowel' (both 2003) look like shop-bought readymades but have in fact been painstakingly modelled in wood and steel. Displayed in vitrines, the tools have been shorn of their usefulness, and thus of their place in the cycle of technology (tools beget ever more sophisticated tools). In 'Wave' (2006), Karasick shows an inkjet print of stills of a woman's face during orgasm. The still is taken from an online forum, Beautiful Agony, whose contributors showcase video clips of their faces during orgasm. Here, and in the neighbouring work, '11 Seconds' (2006), a microcrystalline wax painting derived from one of the stills, Karasick gives back something of the intimacy of a moment lost to a potentially endless repetition of like sequences.

Curator Yuu Takehisa's very diverse selection of works manages to evince a similar sensibility on the part of her chosen artists. This consists not only in an ambivalence towards the alarming pace of technological change, its ecological implications and economic imperatives, but also in an attentiveness and sensitivity to what philosophers are wont to call 'sensuous particularity'. Whether it is the tactile density and brittleness of dubplates (Dale Berning), the moment of orgasm (Mark Karasick) or the changing meteorological conditions of a Hudson River landscape as relayed by real-time internet streaming (Wolfgang Staehle), it is our affective capacity for experiencing the 'thingness' of things that is held to be at risk in today's culture of innovation. In her catalogue essay, Takehisa picks up on an observation by philosopher and noted Heidegger scholar Hubert Dreyfus, that the phenomena of hyperlinking on the World Wide Web has stimulated an online culture of distraction whereby the internet becomes an 'information labyrinth'. We don't know which way to turn, only that we must keep moving. The artists in Slow Life point to ways in which, through technology itself, we can learn to stand still and take stock.