

Exhibitions from Okay Mountain & David Ryan at Mark Moore Gallery

FEBRUARY 15, 2013 by MEGAN KOESTER

Mark Moore Gallery proudly presents Long Plays, the first Los Angeles solo exhibition of works by Austin-based artist collective **Okay Mountain**. Concurrently, the gallery also presents Object > Path > Outline Stroke, a solo exhibition in the Project Room of sculptural paintings by Las Vegas-based artist **David Ryan**. An opening reception for the exhibitions, both of which run through March 16th, will take place from 6PM to 8PM on Saturday, February 16th.



Drawing upon various media, including video, sculpture, photography and drawing, Okay Mountain's nine members pay homage to the ubiquitous content of contemporary consumer culture. Long Plays delves further into the collective's observations about the calculated fluidity between entertainment, commodities, and advertising.

In 2006, Okay Mountain formed their collective and simultaneously opened an exhibition space in East Austin, Texas, by the same name. Their participation on both the production and vending sides of the same industry contributed to a shared heightened awareness about the nature of that has manifested itself in objects and performances that parody our uniquely American reverence for commerce. Through calculated exaggeration and espousal of the absurd, Okay Mountain creates farcical caricatures of a national identity. Faux infomercials, flyers, guidebooks, and memos are rife with satirical imitations of salesmen, tour guides and mascots – playing on our communal tendency for insatiable want.

In Long Plays, the artists analyze the strategies of catalogue photography, corporate procedure, and "How To" books to fulfill an undefined yearning for perfection. As consumers, we're often told that the perfect handyman tool, business plan, or instructional manual can guide you towards your best self; Okay Mountain riffs on these distorted perceptions, and lampoons their fallacies with a shrewd wit. Nonsensical instructions scrawled across a whiteboard mimic the brainstorm sessions of a start-up company, but ultimately lead to inconclusive results. Products born from harebrained invention appear fetishized and enticing, but are fundamentally useless. Okay Mountain identifies the contrivances that shape our relentless desire for immediacy and accumulation, and spoofs them with a sagacious flair.

While object-like in physicality, David Ryan's works soften the distinction between the architectural, geographic, biomorphic, and abstract. In distorting the viewer's perception of depth, plane, and contour, Ryan creates ambiguous, but alluring compositions that engage with both quirky artifice and aesthetic formality.



Object > Path > Outline Stroke will feature several new works, as well as a progressive development in Ryan's overall practice. While still absorbed with the slick perfection of finish fetish, and procedural focus of hard edge abstraction, Ryan now also incorporates purposeful imperfections that animate his interest in organic form. Meticulously exact profiles are now wed with seemingly imprecise grooves, outlines, and crevices – paying homage to the spontaneity and uninhibited development intrinsic to creative process.

His work explores the dynamic between craft and mass production, art and design, man and machine on an increasingly astute level, as evidence of the artist's own mortality is left permanently rendered on his bold terrains. An optical conundrum that echoes Robert Therrien's suggestively consumer-based forms and Ellsworth Kelly's willfully reductive abstraction,

Ryan's work is an enchanting study in phenomenology as well as the collective unconscious.