

*Waterhome* Brand New Gallery, Milan

September -November 2013

Waterhome is the factory name of an aquarium that was given to me as a gift a few years ago. I decided that I didn't want any animals living in my house so I just filled the aquarium with water. The aquarium began to produce layers of algae that would eventually die and fall from the glass walls of the tank. This fallen algae would decompose and the aquarium would continue to produce more algae. I was attracted to the constant production of the tank. The production was the narrative and this narrative would end and then repeat and end and repeat and so on, without any sort of progression or goal.

I began to make paintings on glue sized canvas that I had intended to stand in as locations for me to reenact the actions of the aquarium. I chose four colors that I perceived in the algae or that combine to match certain colors suggested by the algae. I paint one monochromatic layer of paint on the canvas per day and stop when the canvas appears to be a light absorbing, ruddy black, so that I can discern no change from further accretion of paint. Flaws in the canvas support allow the paint to bleed through the surface in an incidental, patternless manner. While the front of these paintings is where I behave as the aquarium "behaves", the surface of themselves are inchoate, refusing to speak of pictorial reference beyond an ostensibly black monochrome which if having any sign value is as a sign for the historical black monochrome. The areas where the pigment bleeds through the canvas make the reverse sides appear to resemble, mimetically, the algae covered walls of the aquarium. I decide randomly whether or not to leave the paintings as I painted them or whether to unstretch and reverse them, exposing the side that appears to be subjective but is, in fact, a blind material composition.

The aquarium isn't a painter's object like a bowl of pears is or a view from my studio window, a patient sitter in a chair, a photograph of any of these things or even a structuralist allegory is. It is more like a cathedral without a religion. In this way, as a shell for performative inhabitation, it is a vessel for drag. Indistinguishable as a subject or an object I use it as an attempt to drown out any narrative of artistic progress that could be read as a lesson of biographical accumulation. Where my attempt fails to pass is where it exposes my desire to refrain from courtship rituals of expressionistic self diarizing.

The exhibitions I've made with this work relate to each other as different iterations yet they never seem to resolve an ideal presentation for the work. What is causal in the paintings isn't necessarily transferable to the expectations of exhibition. There have been arrangements describing the process and content and there have been arrangements that have masked it, mocked it, occasionally undermining whatever delicate potential for meaning might exist there by masochistically repositioning elements of the work as decorative artifice or as functional objectification. Eventually the exhibits come down and I begin again.

James Krone, September 2013

