

'Artist Interview: Chris Bond'

With Jane O'Sullivan

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What have you been working on lately? What is it, and what is it about?

Well, to be honest it's been all about me – I've been making small paintings of fictional exhibition catalogues for shows that I've never had, at a range of fictional art spaces, with accompanying fictional funding agency logos, set in the past, present and future. It's a way of implanting myself in my work as a kind of artist of my own imagining, then using this as a basis for critique – for the shortcomings of my own practice, and as a satire of professional artistic ambition.

What was the working process you adopted for this new series of work?

It's a complicated and lengthy process, about three months from start to finish for each work. I begin by designing a catalogue on computer, then print it out, fold, staple and wear it a little to make it appear used. Then I take a photo of the object resting either flat or standing half open, and use this photo as the basis for the painting, which is made in oil over a thin linen stretched board. The catalogue is painted in such a way that it appears to float on the surface of the linen.

We've seen you draw from old books (in the 2008 exhibition *White*), the seductive power of the screen (in *Watchers in 2009*) and now exhibition catalogues. What draws you to media as a source of inspiration?

I suppose the obvious thing would be to say that we're surrounded by these things to the point of saturation, and that they have an insidious effect on the way our culture is disseminated and the way we relate to each other. In addition, I'm interested in the small failures and decay that plague different media, which are indicative of the fact that humans are responsible for their making and that they will ultimately crumble. I see my paintings as a form of still life, of dead things.

Do you collect exhibition catalogues yourself? Do you have any favourites?

For some reason in the mid 1990s I went berserk with collecting invites and exhibition catalogues and never got rid of them, which was useful for the current series of work. I particularly like the ones covered in row after row of funding logos, which you could easily confuse as being the real content.

What ideas or issues do you feel are currently influencing your work?

Self-critique is probably the thing foremost in my mind right now. I see these catalogues as a way of passing judgment on the way I make art, as the first step in a long process of self evaluation.

When & why did you first begin making art?

As a teenager I copied things obsessively with pencil – not for public display, but purely for my own pleasure. It was very indulgent and it still is. And finally, how do manage the tough job of earning a crust as an artist? I haven't reached crust status yet. I've usually made art at night in between paid work and parenting, not an ideal situation but difficult to avoid.