

TOOL-USE

Sean Edwards (UK) / Matt Harle (US) / Sam Keogh (IRL)
Adam Thompson (UK) / Amy Yao (US)

curated by David Beattie

18.06.11 - 29.07.11

*"Humans are primary tool-users. They use tools to mediate their interaction with other human beings and the world."*¹

TOOL-USE looks at objects and their use, from their inherent materiality and usefulness to their use value. The artists revel in the 'thingness' of found materials, ready-mades and household objects. While the works in this exhibition acknowledge the objects' histories, production, form and worth, the materials are utilised in a manner that allows for a discussion of time, space and being. Of particular interest within this is not the deskilling of the ready-made, but its reskilling. Here the artists not only explore the material for what it is, but offer an alternative use. The ambiguous introduction of the alterations of the human hand switches their relationship from product receiver to tool-user.

Although integral to the works in this exhibition, the artists' imprint is very slight, with the original material or functioning object never completely distorted. Amy Yao's glass work retains its transparency and fragility; Matt Harle delicately joins pieces of wood with elastic-like paint, relying on the properties of each to hold it together. The framed elements of discarded boards, foam panels and broken plasma screens of Adam Thompson seem to serve as a shrine to their previous use and value.

*"The world is an infrastructure of equipment already at work, of tool-beings unleashing their forces upon us just as savagely or flirtatiously as they duel with one another. Insofar as the vast majority of these tools remain unknown to us, and were certainly not invented by us, it can hardly be said that we 'use' them in the strict sense of the term. A more accurate statement would be that we silently rely upon them, taking them for granted as that naïve landscape on which even our most jaded and cynical schemes unfold."*²

Rather than taking them for granted as Harman states, TOOL-USE presents us with a world full of objects and asks us to look beyond the material, to consider the world as a set of tools to take up as active tool-users.

1 John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade*, (p.89, 2007)

2 Graham Harman, *Tool-Being: Heidegger and the Metaphysics of Objects* (p.20, 2002)