

Alex Dordoy
The Weather Channel
The Modern Institute, Osborne Street
3rd September 2021

Alex Dordoy's latest solo exhibition at The Modern Institute, *The Weather Channel*, presents a body of new paintings that develop the graphic representational language in use since his 2015 show, *Model T*, with the gallery. Focussing primarily on landscapes, the artist drastically alters found images, transforming them into ethereal, sublime visions that induce a longing for seas and mountains - a desire for nature in the age of smartphones, megacities, and pandemics.

Attracted by their seductive nostalgia, the paintings are derived from vintage travel posters, the specifics stripped from the original adverts to exploit their inherent anonymity. Colours are changed to heighten the atmosphere - sometimes romantic, sometimes ominous – and set the scenes at liminal times of day. In *Weather Channel (Dawn)* and *Weather Channel (Dusk)*, a small boat anchors the ever-flowing hours. Figures that would have existed in the environment are removed, resulting in landscapes freed of their original time and space. This curious absence of humanity evokes a sense of loneliness: in *Striding Behind You* and *Rising to Meet You*, a central figure reclining in the surf has been erased, and the surf now breaks over nothing. Froth on the water is abstracted into a half-formed language, infusing the scene with a new symbolism.

In smaller works, the intimate scale foregrounds a playfulness with imagery and approach. Derived from a Danish Art Deco exhibition poster, *The Thousand Year Forest*, features the word 'Still' cropped from the original Udstilling¹. Reading as both command and defiance, it gives voice to the eerie silence existent in other works. *The Weaver Star* is based on a stencil for an Edo² period kimono pattern: birds, once free, are now caught in flight, contained in a vitrine – the shadow behind them an illusion of impermanence. Dordoy cites the influence of Japanese prints on Western art, connecting it to the posters referenced in the show and to the start of the hyper-globalised, image saturated world that we now inhabit.

Blocks of intense, flat colour and fades rendered in acrylic are contrasted by different painterly gestures: wet on wet, scumbling, glazing. Layers become a surface architecture, documenting the slow process of their making; and while their precise rendering retains a graphic hardness, traces of the human hand remain. If absence is a running theme throughout the works, it is generally to be understood as an invitation, an expectation that

¹ Danish, 'exhibition'

² Between 1603 and 1867 in the history of Japan

the viewer will step into the landscape and complete the half-formed memory. Not so, however, in *The Expected Guest*, the show's figurative anomaly: based on a stock image of a robot looking at itself in the mirror, its gaze is fixed in an impenetrable feedback loop. Painted in airbrushed metallic acrylic, the surface has no give. Yet, in its own way, as with the rest of the paintings in the show, it is an image of longing - a longing to break out from the self, from the screen, from the city, and a desire disappear into the forgotten beauty of nature.

Alex Dordoy (b. 1985, Newcastle) lives and works in London. He received his BFA from the Glasgow School of Art in 2007 and completed the residency program at De Ateliers, Amsterdam in 2009. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Ruin is Rune', GRIMM, New York (2020); 'Summer's Ego', GRIMM, Amsterdam (2018); 'The Moss is Dreaming (Curated by Tom Morton)', BlainSouthern, London (2017); 'From Svalbard Soil', The Modern Institute, 14—20 Osborne Street, Glasgow (2017); 'Model T', The Modern Institute, 3 Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2015); 'Sleepwalker', Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag (2014); 'persistencebeatsresistance', Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2014); 'I'd planned a cloud but it took me by surprise', ReMap4, Athens (2013).

Selected group exhibitions include: 'Away in the Hill', GRIMM, New York (2019); 'Doodle & Disegno', BlainSouthern, Berlin (2018); 'Future Eaters', Monash University Museum of Art, Caulfield East (2017); 'I still believe in miracles', Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2016); 'What's Up', Soho Revue and Union Club, London (2016); 'Use/User/Used', Zabłudowicz Collection, London (2016); 'Office Space', Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (2015); 'Crab Walk', Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland (2015); 'Breakin' Up Is Hard to Do', KARST, Plymouth (2015); 'THE NOING UV IT', Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2015); 'GENERATION: 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland', Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2014).