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Daniel Turner at Parrasch Heijnen, LA



*Installation view. Daniel Turner, untitled, uv solax glass, rubber, 84" x 168" x 2.5" each (unique) 2016.
credit: Parrasch Heijnen Gallery)*

By JEFFREY GRUNTHANER, APR. 2016

Daniel Turner is emerging as a forceful presence on the contemporary art scene. A man of few but highly impactful words, his creative output is similarly minimal and precise. When he makes objects, they tend to reference recognizable forms, with eerily recognizable functions. A group of sculptures I saw at Team Gallery, in 2014, could be described as troughs, too diminutive and elongated to have an identifiable purpose. Precisely wrought, they felt both alluring and alien; they seemed to repel interaction at the same time as they invited it.

Turner's new sculptures, exhibiting at Parrasch-Heijnen in LA, look like large tinted windows, decontextualized enough so as to appear "window-like." In the words of the press release, "the artist has developed two architectural scaled works in tempered glass. Consisting of several sheets of leaning glass stacked in two sections along the gallery wall, each sculpture forms a transparent achromatic scale." Rectangular in shape, the fact that the works are collections, strategically placed together, coupled with the uniqueness of their size, distinguishes them from panes that one would think to look through.

I've seen these sculptures in diminutive forms at Turner's impressively empty, laboratory-like studio in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. Imagining those smaller works become enlarged, I immediately thought of surveillance, of the glass

towers that canopy Manhattan. Like the privatization of information, corporate architecture appears transparent, as though you could see inside it. Those buildings, however, bar outside viewers any clear vantage point. Standing behind the glass—enclosed by it—you can gaze out onto an entire city. From the outside, you can barely make out your own reflection.

On the occasion of Turner's eponymous exhibition in L.A., he and I spoke about his recent body of work, finally conducting our interview via email. What follows is from this email exchange, featuring Turner's unedited responses.

Jeffrey Grunthaler: The works you're showing at Parrasch-Heijnen, LA, resemble works you've exhibited previously with Franklin Parrasch in NY. Both bodies of work resemble windows, and are untitled. Are these new pieces continuations of the old? Does the same concept underlie both?

Daniel Turner: The material and idea for the pieces remain the same. Only the composition, scale, and coloring of the glass has shifted. The changes were fairly reserved, rather formal, nothing was manipulated.

JG: You mentioned to me that these works remind you of the weather. I think of "weather" as a kind of pressure ineluctably influencing the arrangement of daily life, like snow or the mild climate of spring. Can you elaborate on this remark?

DT: When I mentioned that the pieces reminded me of weather I'm thinking more in terms of painterly weather-variations of hue. The panes' proximity to the wall presents itself less with social preoccupations or natural phenomena so I find them quite painterly, even while reflecting its surroundings.

JG: Glass seems like a peculiar medium to work with, in that it always bears a certain degree of transparency. Apart from intuition, could you tell me more about how you view the interplay between the function of a window (something you see out of, or through), and its placement in your sculptural work?

DT: Unfortunately it really is just intuition. There is no interesting back story about how I fell through a pane of glass. Of course the properties of glass are incredibly complex. Its uses are universal from surveillance to pharmaceutical handling. Glass is neutral, almost indifferent, all of which I find attractive. At some point you start to work with what holds your interest.

JG: In light of the minimalism of your exhibitions (which sometimes, if I'm not mistaken, have included only wall-rubbings, or traces of corrosion left on a floor), what do you hope to accomplish from your shows overall?

DT: The same thing we all want—a transaction worth the time, a heightened sense of awareness.



Daniel Turner, untitled (detail), uv solax glass, rubber, 84" x 168" x 2.5," 2016. (Photo credit: Parrasch Heijnen Gallery)

JG: Your sculptures distinguish themselves not only by their subtlety, but by the way they suggest industrial detritus. This aspect, though, is tempered by the way in which they present themselves: your sculptures are clean, polished, with little traces of the labor that went into making them. What is the relation between how you make a work, and the way in which it achieves its fully realized form?

DT: For the most part I work site specifically, meaning that the pieces are never fully resolved until the sculptures are placed.

JG: The works you're exhibiting at Parrasch-Heijnen possess the ostensibly menacing aspect of corporate architecture. Were corporate buildings an inspiration for this body of work?

DT: Absolutely.

JG: I'm curious about who you're looking at, and who you might cite as an influence for the works exhibited in this particular show, as well as influences on your work generally.

DT: Everyone from John Constable, to Mies van der Rohe; from Philip Glass, to Larry Bell.

JG: What materials do you prefer to work with? Is there anything specific about glass that especially interests you?

DT: I can't say I prefer any material over another. What's important is how the material is handled in a particular context at a particular time. WM

Daniel Turner runs through April 23