Wooly Mammoth. Robin Webb.

Presents presents.. at Rabbet, Peckham, Dec 2023

A South London light industrial estate rendered as gentrification fan-zone. A car Park masquerading as a day-festival's smoking area. A victorian cricket bat factory filled with well milked creatives churning out Will-O'-the-wisp's and blank smiles. Welcome to the Bussey Building F/W 2023

Amongst the ubiquitous, post-industrial weekend fun-hub setting, a raised blue roller shutter hosts a more messy embellishment. A floor to ceiling approximation of a Japanese noren welcome curtain hangs filling the doorway, forming a 200 threadcount signpost-cum-barrier to what lies beyond. Hand painted in a variety of fluorescent colours upon satin fabric are the 7 characters P I T T O R E, pronouncing in classical Italian that rather than sushi or bubble tea, the wares of a painter can be found inside. If you can only navigate your way across the threshold.

Once the physical confrontation of the full bodied konichiwa of the first painting is navigated, an over-lit, floor to ceiling expanse of #FFFFFF readjusts the white balance of our eyes. We behold a vague approximation of a high end fashion boutique run through a homemade Space Odyssey filter. Minimal, discombobulating, there are a few recognisable, aesthetic objects on display but nothing feels as if it's for sale while simultaneously seeming like they should not merely be looked at either.

An array of eight colourful paintings are displayed on the wall, two more are suspended in space on horizontal poles that traverse the width of the room, and a further three are on the floor of the entirely white space. The vertically displayed works are paintings in acrylic onto handmade, oversized approximations of fake Gucci jumpers, made from cut up domestic bath towels & hot glue. The visual content of which includes classical mythology, Romanov vases, erupting volcanoes, biblical characters, and stoned cartoon dog faces. The horizontal works consist of decoupaged fabric onto vintage rag-rugs, with similarly varied and aloof content, including that blazed dog again.

Robin's idiosyncratic take on Socialist Realism run through a pop filter lends itself uniquely to this 'painting come to life' effect of the canvas becoming a sculpture. It's like a Rose Wylie pop up book, or dropping acid at a Guston retrospective. They are very much paintings, but they're also much more than that. His morphing of the high brow

with the low brow, in both form and content, looks like the two cultural classes have got themselves caught up in Jeff Goldblum's teleportation device in The Fly.

The stoned dog jumper having Chaim Soutine's name emblazoned down its extra long arms slash ears, tracksuit style, to intentionally add some historical weight to the otherwise daft teenagers pencil case sensibility of the pooch's heavy lidded, tongue lolling face. Both front and back of St John the Baptists cartoon head on a platter, on either side of the suspended jumper, questions what iconography we choose to adorn ourselves with, and how theres always a banal reverse angle to every situation of note. The erupting Vesuvius jumper could ask what are our limits of disaster rubber-necking, and whether anything is off limits to fashion, and our self representation becoming mindlessly desensitised to imagery and its meaning. A couple of the paintings are direct copies of existing past season Gucci jumpers, though you'd be hard pressed to guess which, and that's exactly the point.

Art, curating, high fashion, street fashion, culture, politics, history. The internets incessant seep outwards into the physical world, through our attitudes, expectations, and drooling indifference, are increasingly rendering all these facets of society into one ever-growing, pulsating, amorphous blob of little meaning but maximum visual referencing. Nothing holds any weight any longer, art doesn't smack you round the chops with a stunning revelation of the meaning of life, or a an emotional gut punch that sticks with you for weeks on end, leaving you breathless and confused, because we see too much stuff. Our eyes are tired, and it all looks the fucking same anyway. Van Gogh has moved on from the museum shop, to the Uniqlo spring summer range. The Art Basel merch stand is frighteningly well frequented. Perhaps a small antidote to this march towards the cultural singularity could just be some post-post-ironic paintings, on ridiculously large knock off branded sweaters, made on the kitchen floor with glue covered fingers and paint on the lino. Something tangible, and messy, and offering up space to interpret and think for yourself. Robin's paintings have the single mindedness of someone who disbelieves, the confidence of a heathen at the consumerist altar refusing his matcha latte wafer, faking it 'til he makes it whilst simultaneously being completely authentic and not giving a shit. You can tell he paints exactly what he wants, and he loves doing it, as this is what Robin's work serves us up; fun alongside the thinking. And with these works, through making something fake, he manages to make something real.

JJ Winter, Aug '25