



Installation View, Kayode Ojo, Eden, 52 Walker. Courtesy Walker, of New York

Sebastian Jefford⁷¹

Interview by Brooke Wilson

Born 1990

Born in Swansea, Wales, 1990. Sebastian Jefford lives and works in Berlin, recent exhibitions include In 2023, The Living World of Animals was exhibited at Gianni Manhattan in Vienna, Austria (solo), and Amid The Alien Corn was showcased at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, Germany. In 2022, Sentiment, Sediment was presented at Galleri Opdahl in Stavanger, Norway (solo), while DES CHAMPS DE FRAISES POUR L'ÉTERNITÉ appeared at La Galerie, centre d'art contemporain de Noisy-le-Sec, France. The exhibition Optimised Fables about a Good Life took place at PLATO in Ostrava, Czech Republic, and a group show was held at Rob Tufnell in Venice, Italy. In 2021, the artist participated in Frieze London with Gianni Manhattan (solo), and presented Natural Gas at Liebaert Projects in Kortrijk, Belgium (solo). The two-person show The Medieval and The Minimal with Oliver Osborne was featured at Becky's in Berlin, Germany, followed by Severance, a two-person show with Marina Faust at Gianni Manhattan in Vienna, Austria. Additionally, Corps was exhibited at Mamoth in London, UK. In 2020, the exhibitions included Invitation To Love at Kunstverein Bremerhaven in Bremerhaven, Germany, This Margin Will Be Your Vantage Point at In Situ Fabienne Leclerc in Paris, France, and This Tragedy at Fonda in Leipzig, Germany.



The Medieval and The Minimal (with Oliver Osborne), Beckys, Berlin, 2021.
Courtesy of the artist, Photo: Nick Ash



The Medieval and The Minimal (with Oliver Osborne), Beckys, Berlin, 2021.
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An assortment of multimedia works populate the studio space, from large-scale sculptural forms to A3-sized works on paper. Can you explain how the process of making begins?

I suppose I am very much an intuitive artist. So things come out of experimentation and through the process of making. I guess if I'm thinking back, over the last 10 years or something, this idea of reconstruction has been a kind of constant. Or the history or time or something that's inherently unstable and always in flux. And it took me a long time to work out how I could translate what I wanted to talk about through my work. But I guess now I am considering, how you make objects or sculptures ask questions, rather than, say what they're doing.

Some of the works appear to have an aged aesthetic, which in some cases is artificially generated by processes in the studio. How does this ageing process contribute to the overall narrative of the work?

I always try and make things feel tired or old. So like, for example in 'TITLE' after I've painted them, I'll do a layer of dry brushing, which is a technique I learnt when I was a child and used to do Warhammer. It is a process of making armour look aged. You use a dry brush, and it makes it look dirty and used. I like the process of artificial ageing.

I almost want the work to feel like they have their own life. And literally, the tables do. I mean, I went around Berlin and got them.

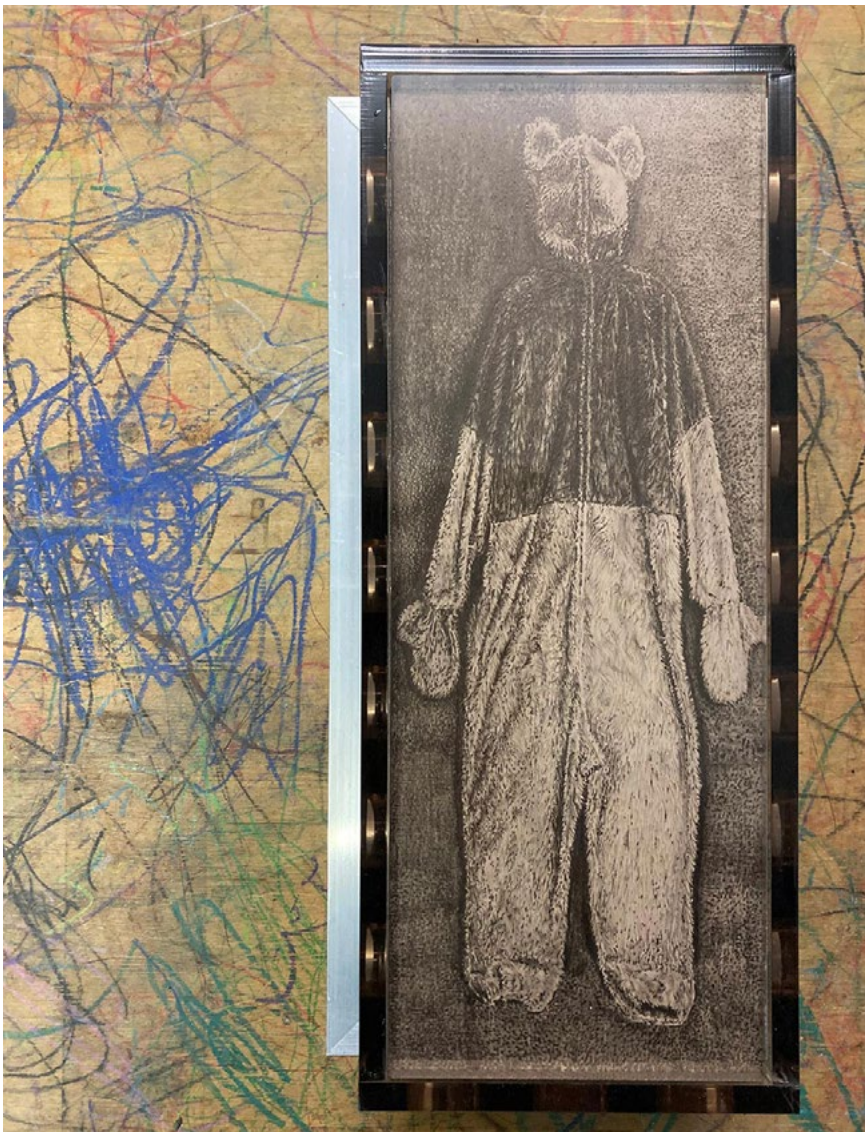
In your practice, visual imagery and materiality are constantly being re-contextualised; drawing seemingly disparate images together in unexpected ways. How do these juxtapositions function? What are you hoping to discuss by doing this?

I like these dichotomies, they become a game of opposites somehow.

In our daily lives, we are exposed to a multitude of different visual and linguistic information, from road signs to instruction manuals and internet memes. Each requires a different form of engagement. Within your work, various modes of understanding are interrogated. What role does language have in your overall practice?



Looping. (detail), 2021, Perspex, car tyres, cereal, epoxy resin, cement. Courtesy of the artist, Photo: Nick Ash



Reptile (detail), 2023, Found table, plexiglass, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper
60 x 50 x 60 cm. Courtesy of the artist KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin



Amphibian, (detail), 2023, Found table, plexiglass, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper
60 x 50 x 60 cm. Courtesy of the artist KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin



Amphibian, 2023, Found table, plexiglass, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper
60 x 50 x 60 cm, Courtesy of the artist KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin

I'm taking the language of museums or things that are trying to demonstrate something or show something and I try and mess with that. Again, coming back to the diagrams and stuff, it's like, I like these languages that are trying to be certain about something. I like trying to take them and make them uncertain, I suppose. A way I always try to think about it is like trying to take a brick and turn it back into clay or something, which is impossible. There's something absurd in that pursuit which I quite like.

In your new works on paper, 'TITLE', the drawn line is replaced by a rubble-like motif exploring perspective and disrupting our immediate reading of the image. Can you explain the ideas behind this series?

Where I grew up, there's a lot of Neolithic stone burial grounds. You can find them in old, books that talk about them, and they often have an aerial view with rubble lines. And it's kind of interesting when you're in these places, and you can't see the shape of the situation that you're in or something. I think about archaeology or reconstructed history as this way of making material speak, which is why there are speech bubbles in these new drawings. There's something enigmatic about the rock saying something or nothing.

There seems to be an elusive element to the work; as if the objects haven't quite finished explaining themselves. What are your thoughts on this? Is this slippery quality something you wish to express?

I like looking at work where I don't know what it is. I guess there's a part of me that chases that idea ...

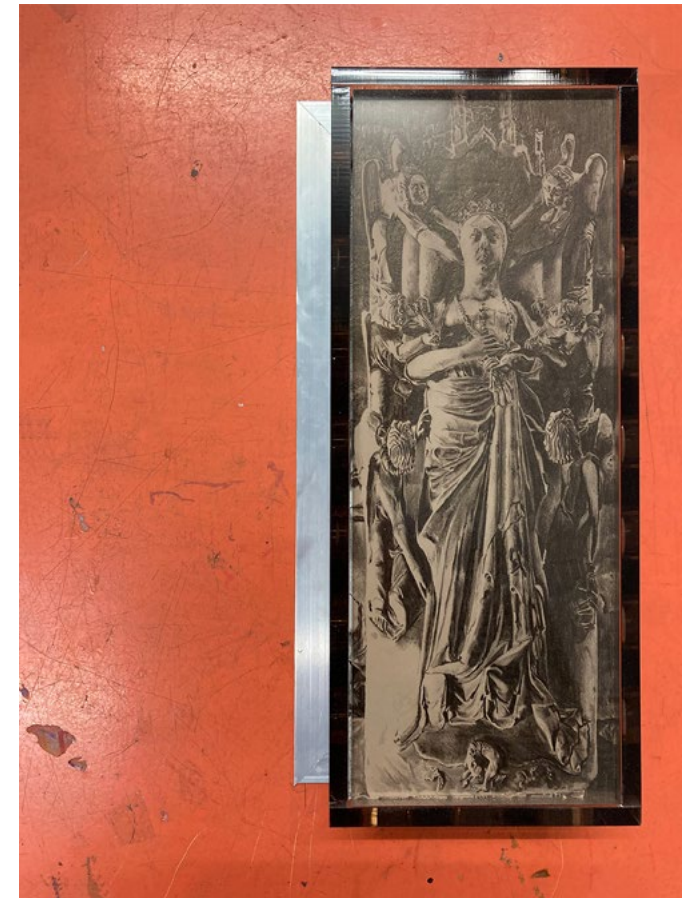
In work 'XXX' the exterior form is patched together with these buttons, like on jackets, to suggest this idea that it could unfurl itself, or be re-popped elsewhere, like it could take a different form at some point, like a garment.



Reptile, 2023, Found table, plexiglass, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper
60 x 50 x 60 cm, Courtesy of the artist KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin



Crustacean, 2023, Found table, plexiglass, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper
80 x 50 x 60 cm, Courtesy of the artist KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin



Crustacean (detail), 2023, Found table, plexiglass, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper, 80 x 50 x 60 cm, Courtesy of the artist and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin



Installation view, *The Living World of Animals*, Gianni Manhattan, Vienna, 2023,
Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



Installation view, *The Living World of Animals*, Gianni Manhattan, Vienna, 2023,
Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



Installation view, *The Living World of Animals*, Gianni Manhattan, Vienna 2023, Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



Limescale sonata, 2023, acrylic and india ink on canvas, 150 x 95cm
Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



Threads, 2023, perspex, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper, 13 x 31 x 35cm,
Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



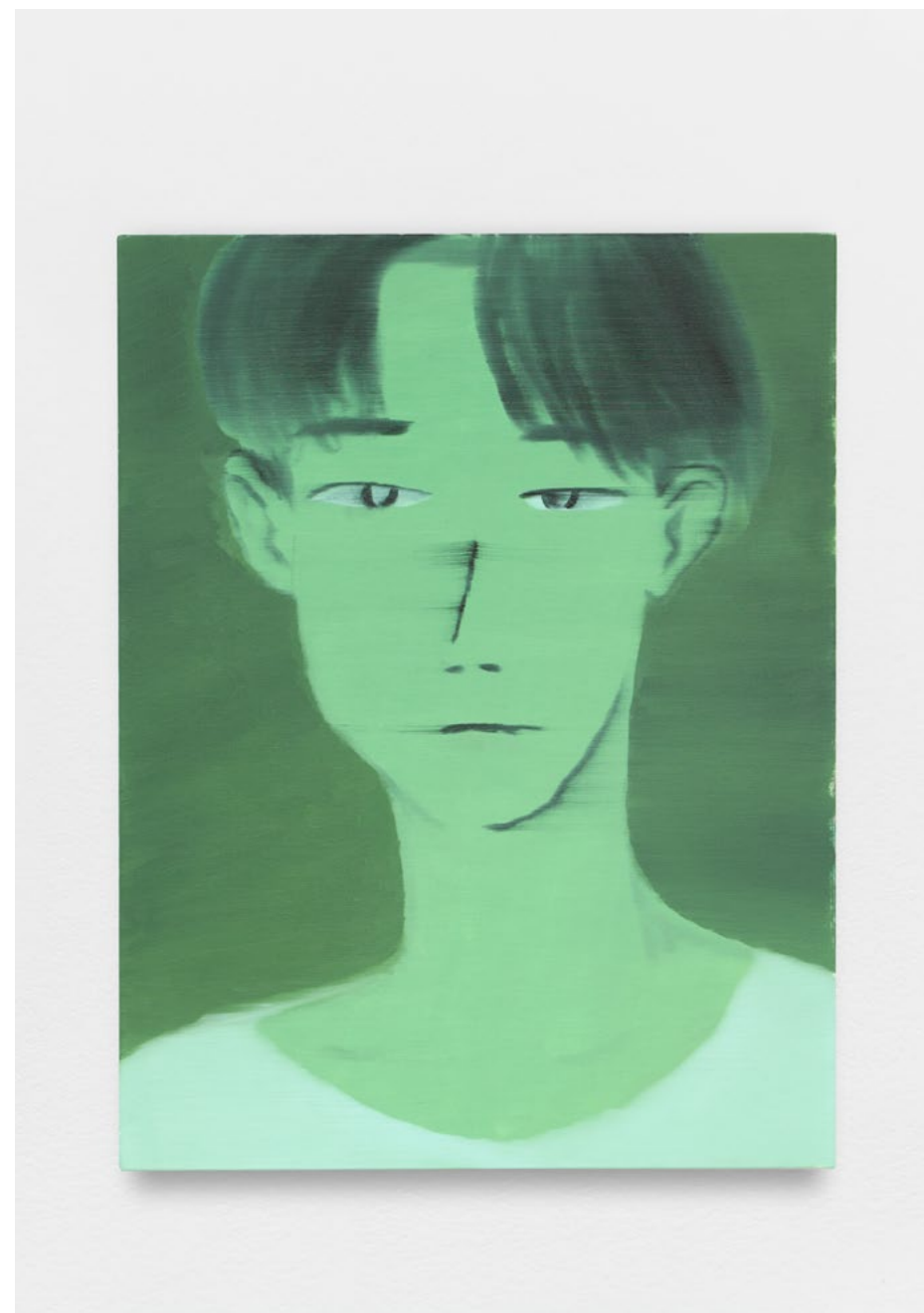
The vile stuff, 2023, wood, perspex, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper, 58 x 50 x 58cm
Courtesy of the artist Gianni Manhattan



The vile stuff (detail), 2023, wood, perspex, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper, 58 x 50 x 58cm, Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



The vile stuff (detail), 2023, wood, perspex, metal, aquarium sand, found notes, graphite on paper, 58 x 50 x 58cm, Courtesy of the artist and Gianni Manhattan



boy in green, 2022, oil on canvas,
65,2 × 50 cm. Courtesy of the artist
and Crèvecœur, Paris. Photo: Aurélien Mole

Yu Nishimura (b.1982) in Kanagawa. *Lives and works*
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