

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

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"Seriality"

Author: Sarah Kessler
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Five seemingly identical policemen survey the interior of Chicago's Shane Campbell Gallery. On closer inspection, these lawn-ornament-size officers resolve into reproductions of Michelangelo's *David*, their Grecian physiques sheathed in contemporary uniforms. Cast from the same mold and coated with white epoxy paint, this series of "updated" art-historical figures by Pentti Monkkonen forms a humorously mundane sequence of sameness that points toward (and enacts) representational overkill. Working in serial formats, the three other artists in this aptly titled exhibition likewise deploy strategies of repetition and reproduction, to varying ends. Michael Phelan might be closest to Monkkonen in his calculated recirculation of a cultural signifier already emptied of meaning. His linen canvases, tie-dyed with chevron patterns and hung side by side, appear fresh from the assembly line despite their color differences and minor imperfections. Pieces in a series ironically titled "Free Yourself from the Habits, Compulsions, and Feelings That Hold You Back," 2007, these works are for sale individually, a market reality that highlights the increasing commodification of (supposedly) countercultural symbols. Eileen Quinlan's shimmering yet sharply lined abstract photographs speak similarly to their own insubstantiality. Closely presented in succession, and ostensibly derived from the same negative, the prints differ only in hue, which ranges from deep red to aquamarine. Depicting angular shards of mirror that reflect no object—the series's title is "Smoke & Mirrors"—Quinlan's tinted images traffic in the reproduction of illusion. The strong verticals of Anthony Pearson's black-and-white prints, which reiterate the silhouette of a lone, pointy mountain peak, are positioned adjacent to Quinlan's work. Available only as a unique artist's proof, Pearson's project hinges on burning his chosen icon into the viewer's brain. The charm of "Seriality" is that it does not claim to tell us something new. Building series from series, the exhibition simply invites us to revel in the realm of repetition.

2021 S WABASH AVE
CHICAGO IL 60616
+1 (312) 226 2223

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