

Roderick Harris- Showdown

Sept 5th- Oct 7th

Private view Tues Sept 6th. 6.30-8.30

Roderick Harris paints 'The Future', to quote from the Leonard Cohen song;

“Things are gonna slide
slide in all directions
Won't be nothing
You can measure anymore”

In “The monuments of Passaic” and other essays, Robert Smithson describes a world in a state of collapse in which buildings and technological structures shore themselves up against the surrounding decay into which they will inevitably slide. Construction opposes entropic decline- Smithson describes the suburbs as “ruins in reverse”. Harris takes the kitsch ideal- the beautiful opalescent landscape painting, the etiolated country church carried out in “Fimo”™ and puts them into a state of meltdown. Satellite dishes collapse into themselves like Claes Oldenburg pancakes, tower blocks turn to jelly.

As the picture collapses, a different process takes over. The kitsch façade gives way to a state of matter more akin to Smithson's 1969 land-art piece “Asphalt Rundown”. Stilled matter- chaos put in quote marks. The little fence around the melted model- this reassures us we are experiencing spectacle, not reality. We are in the realm of the imaginary, so these works become psychological portraits.

Harris' works are about small things in big spaces, small marks making up the whole constellation. They are about clusterings, encrustations, the pull of gravity on fragile structures. They are both epic and feeble, romantic and wanked-out.

Daniel Coombs. 2000