

Jim Verburg, A Certain Silence, Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto

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Jim Verburg

← *Untitled*, from the series *An Accurate Silence*, 2017; *Untitled (...in and of itself)*, 2017.

Photos : Toni Hafkenschied, courtesy of the artist and Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto

↑ *Untitled #2* and *#1*, from the series *When It Becomes Clear*, 2017.

Photo : Toni Hafkenschied, courtesy of the artist and Zalucky Contemporary, Toronto

Jim Verburg *A Certain Silence*

For his first solo show in Toronto, Dutch-Canadian multimedia artist Jim Verburg has presented a series of magnanimously minimalist works. With a background in film, photography, bookworks, and installation, Verburg developed the bulk of his current method during a printmaking residency for non-printmakers. Instead of relying exclusively on traditional approaches to this mode of production, he utilizes the tools of printmaking in exploratory and unintended ways, creating monochromatic compositions that stand as a testament to the balance between playful experimentation and a painstaking attention to detail.

Although categorically minimal, several of the works in *A Certain Silence* are markedly complex in their construction. Verburg has developed a notable method of layering materials in order to achieve his characteristic glow or “hum.” By painting directly onto a sheet of clouded Mylar, hinging it on Plexiglas, and then setting it in front of a second piece of painted Mylar, he crafts delicate portraits of depth, focus, and texture. This play of surface on surface adds dimension to the subtle visual noise already present where dust or debris prevents the transfer of ink from roller to support. With a sustained gaze, viewers will uncover moments of pure, vibrating energy, as though the paintings themselves are alive with breath. This ever-present sense of movement is confident and exact, but still open to the rich mystery of an undefined present. As though aware of their own transience, the works seem to communicate an awareness of astounding beauty tempered only by the latent whiff of a pensive sadness.

Present also in these cascading tonal gradients and overlapping geometries is the pressure, resistance, and rhythm of Verburg’s own body passing the roller back and forth over the picture plane. The works are like monuments to the paint, ink, powdered graphite, and charcoal that made them. They revel in the nature of their material, so that a sheet of starched

cotton tarlatan becomes yet another perfectly-suited medium for the transference of a new optical unconscious. This is, in the end, an exhibition of unity, both universal and tangible. Each piece features distinct horizon and border lines that delineate space for a more focused meditation. In particular, works such as *Untitled (afterimage)* read like ancient philosophy, turning our thoughts both inward and outward. Our direct experience becomes a surrendering to what was, and what is yet to be. In this way, we are presented with the *idea* of perfection, so that moments of emptiness serve only to strengthen our experience of being here now. It is almost as though the works are holding on to our deepest secrets, not out of greed, but for the sake of a true and examined connection to a life worth living.

Alex Bowron

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