

Theta

Graham Hamilton

Dearly

April 7 - May 13, 2022

Graham Hamilton wanted to bring flowers to New York and here—open your arms! Open your eyes! Do you know who you are?

All kinds of visual and material fullnesses populate *Dearly*. The spirit is of generosity and doubt. Hamilton is homesick. A sincere question hovers in these prints and sculpture about how art ultimately resolves or finds itself in a superabundant world and whether meaning is as eschatologically dispersed as a camera flash on flowers.

Fashion photography is not what I expected to say next but Hamilton is interested in collecting and arranging and therefore in economies of desire. He has a real love for movements (Art Nouveau) and places (flea markets) and I guess industries (luxury fashion) that recycle material history and derive their strange yet inviting aesthetics from obsession and flawed taxonomy.

But back to photography... What Peter Schjeldahl wrote about Wolfgang Tillmans dropping a figurative but also literal pane of glass through a party with his photographs might help me say how Hamilton's methods, from screenprinting to iPhone scanning to flower arranging to framing, both are and are in his images. Stars are a technology. Hamilton has a knack for timeliness. What is being tested is how faithfully the intervention of making into living can be shown without becoming a metaphor.

Since it is me who risks overburdening the work, I will say that what I think art wants from poetry is to employ the meaningful and affective qualities of language without the yoke of discourse. I can relate. I too want writing to be additive, to find freedom in my own formal and material processes. A poem adds up to tension as well as image and reserves the right not to be instrumentalized for or against itself. This may explain a perverse streak in *Dearly's* elaborateness and resplendence where what I come away with is unsolid.

So if I stick with this and call enjambment the break in the framing system or the schism of sign from symbol or the discoloration of cells in the laserjet prints, I can better say how *Dearly*—layers of life and matter and allusion, improvised and appropriated systems of reference and inference and artifact—affects me with the surprising spareness of the gift. And why I keep thinking about John Ashbery, who had to apologize for his poetry. For the uncertainty or flaw that sensitized his work to the world, ecstatically repeating and compounding in its subject matter and the way it is made.

— Amelia Stein

Graham Hamilton (b. 1988, New York) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main. Recent solo exhibitions include Parker Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); False Flag Gallery, Long Island City (2018); Index, Hudson (2018); Baba Yaga Gallery, Hudson (2018). He is a 2021 graduate of Städelschule.