

Diehl, Travis: Marcus Herse. Greene Exhibitions, ARTFORUM, May 2015:383



The three reliefs constituting *Projected Space Between My Legs*, 1970, were installed in a side gallery surrounded by other sculptures—three smaller objects in vitrines (the milk chocolate *Door Stop*, 3 May 1973, and the resin *Monkey Grip* and plaster *Trilobite*, both 1970), as well as a wonderfully perverse wall-mounted assisted readymade of a wheel tethered to a long leather leash (*Allusion [Walking Wheel]*, 1971). The artist had previously photographed *Projected Space* outside for his self-published catalogue *Robert Overby 336 to 1: August 1973–July 1969* (1974), which presents the work within a landscape. In this exhibition, the three reliefs rested on a bed of sod installed on the gallery floor. Like their photographic predecessor, which implied a before and after via the trampled blades that suffered the work's comparatively crushing heft, the installation gestured to its own temporality, elegantly anticipating the dissolution of the scene upon the completion of the show. In this sense, it was—in its bodily contours specific to its maker—a poignant and particular memento mori that pointed to the person missing but everywhere felt.

—Suzanne Hudson

Marcus Herse

GREENE EXHIBITIONS

Visitors to Greene Exhibitions will likely brave that most persistent of LA clichés: terrible traffic. So those who came for Marcus Herse's solo show were primed for a suite of six long videos, projected larger-than-life on each of the gallery's three walls in loops of two, of the artist piloting his car through gridlock. The works were shot using a camera joined to an electric motor mounted to the vehicle's inner roof, which allowed the lens to swivel from left to right in small, even increments. Herse posits driving as "durational" performance, like Situationist wanderings filmed by an autonomous camera-eye à la Michael Snow's *Région Centrale*, 1971. Yet the program here is more masochistic than meandering; Herse keeps his hands at ten and two and doesn't turn or merge (except when he runs out of lane). Above muffled road noise and the occasional polite tick of the turn signal, the dominant sound is the helpful voice of Herse's Google Maps app, constantly giving directions, consistently ignored.

Reclining on one of five aftermarket car seats reupholstered by the artist and stuck to casters, the viewer scooted around a backdrop of freeway-adjacent geography, which offered a tour of the unplanned aesthetic of SoCal. Herse's videos leave us unencumbered, able to look out the window—or at any rate, able to view whatever the apparatus happens to frame. At one point, #23 (*melancholy of departure (after De Chirico)*) CA-110N 20B – US-101S 1D 10 January 2015 (all works

2015), the left-hand side of the triptych, showed rain on the 110 North through downtown. #20 (*plycar*) I-405N 46 I-405N 51 7 January 2015 (the middle projection) threw a good, even exposure of the 405 South; while on the right, #3 (*coruscant 1*) I-10E 14A – I-10E 21 22 December 2014 presented a view of a far-flung Metro station at the magic hour (both in terms of light and traffic). Herse offers his viewers the local charms of car bodies, billboards, truck decals. The chair sculptures in particular, upholstered in "painterly" black/orange, black/white, white/green vinyl schemes and rigged with LEDs, formalize the artist's mis-/unguided appropriation of developed vernacular forms. Casually, fleetingly, the camera composes the shadow on the back of the headrest, the back of the artist's head raked by fine California light, the dappled graffiti on dirt-brown walls. Are we so desensitized to the beauty hemming in our own commutes that we miss this daily spectacle? Does art draw our attention to what we would otherwise pass by?

Coyly alluded to in the show's press release (a screenshot of Google Maps directions) as the "starting point" for one of Herse's journeys is the Glendale Galleria, a hulking masterpiece of a mall that we know from LA lore, or from Herse's ongoing video series "Galleria," 2012–, or from just living here as a prime example of bastardized Nu-Urbanism. As a metaphor for the falseness of our present social architecture, the building haunted Herse's show like a partially realized blueprint for paradise. The "urban landscape" that rolls by outside Herse's window elicits a reel of emotional associations—the smack of ironic appreciation for LA's gaudy sprawl; the guilty pleasure of rubbernecking at a roadside accident; irritation at the promise of an auto-driven metropolis that never materialized. Yet Herse's curated traffic experience does little to heighten, illuminate, or relieve the dull, durational exercise of cultural passengerhood. The thrill of the simulacra, friends, is gone. So why not drive for real—while we still can?

More conceptually generous than Herse's program of chance imagery is his refusal to reach any of his preset destinations. If the artist were to obey the map app's instructions, the car might as well drive itself. Herse halfheartedly adopts the role of menial laborer who still pumps our gas or attends a parking deck—jobs soon to be phased out. In going straight—with the flow, as it were—he abdicates his self-imposed role as driver. If machines will soon do everything, is it left to humans to do *nothing*? This could be an update of Melville's frail Bartleby, who starved himself to death rather than submit to the newly metered timetable of the industrial regime. On his present course, Herse will never—indeed, would prefer not to—arrive at his destination. Still, we can already imagine the unsatisfying conclusion to this quotidian *dérive*: Herse's car, passing gas station after gas station, finally shuddering to a stop—its driver's futile act of refusal causing a not inconsiderable slowdown.

—Travis Diehl



View of "Marcus Herse, 2015."

Mizota, Sharon: Around and around with Marcus Herse at Commonwealth and Council,
www.latimes.com, August 22, 2014

Around and around with Marcus Herse at Commonwealth &...

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-marcus-h...>

Review Around and around with Marcus Herse at Commonwealth & Council



A still from Marcus Herse's video installation "Almost ther (Sunset)" (2014). (Courtesy the artist, Commonwealth & Council, and Greene Exhibitions)

By **SHARON MIZOTA**

AUGUST 22, 2014, 4:00 PM

Marcus Herse's two-hour-plus video loop "Almost ther (Sunset)" (misspelling intentional) puts us in the back seat of a Honda Civic slowly circling through the parking structure at the Glendale Galleria.

Projected wall-size at Commonwealth & Council, it is a grand if utterly mundane tableau: Beyond the back of the driver's head, an endless stream of parked cars and the occasional pedestrian slip through the triptych of the vehicle's windows.

It's boring as heck but remarkable for the way it strips the parking lot of its narrative "drive." There is no looking, no finding, no satisfying stop. The act is stripped of desire, but also of frustration. There is only a serene and relatively constant movement and a barely perceptible darkening — the "sunset" of the title.

Perhaps this open-endedness is why Herse omitted the "e" in "Almost ther." We will never arrive.

This ceaseless motion may be a special circle of hell reserved for shopaholics, but it also inspires wonder at the magnitude and absurdity of this labyrinthine structure built for parked cars.

It is also a meditation on the passage of time. As the car moves, we see not only the path ahead, but also, in the rearview mirror, a smaller, constantly shifting image of where we've been. Moving forward doesn't mean leaving the past behind; it simply changes the view.

Commonwealth & Council, 3006 W. 7th St. #220, L.A., (213) 703-9077, through Aug. 30.
Closed Sundays through Tuesdays. www.commonwealthandcouncil.com

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Steffen, Patrick: Marcus Herse, Flash Art International, Issue 291, July/August/September 2013: 116.

FlashArt REVIEWS

Marcus Herse

Greene Exhibitions, Los Angeles

"Galleria," Marcus Herse's latest show in Los Angeles, is comprised of three videos projected in an alternate loop, transforming the gallery into a contemporary lay temple where it's possible to worship and question the inescapable discreet charm of western capitalism. Although the artist has recently seemed to be engaged in an artistic revival of the Occupy movement, this new body of work is subtler. Proposing himself as a post postmodern urban flaneur, Herse substitutes romantic Parisian boulevards with a sprawling commercial complex, paying an indirect tribute to Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*.

Herse's primary inspiration is Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* from 1929. By encapsulating the camera into a baby stroller he unifies his gaze and moving body, becoming one with his tool of investigation. The artist presents a smooth tracking shot that captures unconscious moments performed by unaware actors. The shopping experience is rendered as an accidental and invisible choreography with a contemplative pace that is continually mitigated by a frenetic chain of instant decisions. There are, at times, moments of pure prosaic poetry, captured for a few seconds: a kid hiding from his mother in a corner of a store window; a security guard running after an elusive thief; a young father pushing a stroller while staring directly at the camera. By avoiding a clear point of view, the work invites the viewer into a highly participative experience.

Herse's camera is the periscope of a stealth scientific submarine exploring the abyss of a gigantic human aquarium, whose desolate floating members are the viewers themselves. Unaware of being observed by the eye of the camera, shoppers enact their most natural behavior. Rather than dwelling on abstract thought or hypothetical intention, Herse's show focuses on the skin of the human populace, using realistic representation to provide a magnified view of our lives.

by PATRICK STEFFEN



"Galleria," 2013. Video-still. Courtesy Greene Exhibitions, Los Angeles.
Photo: Marcus Herse