

BOSTON ART REVIEW

Lines that Fade and Flutter at Proof Gallery

Review

by Avery Robertson and BAR Editorial



Janne Höltermann and S. Billie Mandle

Buried under snow, inside the Distillery building in South Boston, is Proof Gallery's *Lines That Fade and Flutter*: an exhibition of work by Janne Höltermann and S. Billie Mandle. Placed together, their work explores the composition of lines in a manner that both challenges and accentuates the other.

Mandle's Pink hangs on the wall immediately opposite the entrance of the space. Throughout the gallery, each series of her photographs are named only by color. The photos are slightly out of focus, tilted, or rotated – creating an enrapturing sense of disorientation that leads the viewer further into the space. Focused on corners and crisp edges, it is hard to immediately recognize that Mandle's work is that from inside a hospital.



Installation View, S. Billie Mandle, "White" 25 x 30 archival pigment print, 2016 and "Pink" 5 20 x 25 panels, archival pigment prints, 2016

From the periphery of my right eye, lines are being drawn across across a screen. Upon first glance, the movement of the lines mimic the motion one makes when testing out a new pen; long, scribbled, with no apparent direction. Moving closer to the screen, I can see that the lines don't connect, they don't form a picture. It is the lines themselves that are the focus, how they appear and move on the screen and what they could be. Janne Höltermann's [Planes](#) is composed of airplane flight paths, compressed and compiled into a compounded single, dynamic image.



Janne Höltermann Planes Video, 45:00 min., 2016

The subtle murmur of crashing waves fills the gallery. Moving up the small set of stairs to further investigate, I notice that the space Proof Gallery occupies is showing its age through small cracks in the walls and floorboards. I can't help but be attentive to the power of lines as the space itself feels like a part of the overall exhibition.



Janne Höltermann Horizonzoom Video, 02:30 min., 2013

On the second level I find the source of the ocean sound: Höltermann's *Horizonzoom*. The screen pans across a vast ocean of waves, fades to solid white, and then pans back again. The fluctuation between the organic lines of the ocean waves and the orthogonal straight lines of the frame around the white screen. Throughout most of Höltermann's work are notions of movement, transformation, and evolution through something that is otherwise relatively stationary—a line.

A spotlight shines in my face as I watch the ocean video, prompting me to turn and see what it is shining on. *Planes*, a print by Höltermann, is composed of the same line typology as the video on the floor below. In six different still frames, the lines take on different characteristics, resembling seaweed, rollercoaster tracks, or even the tail of an alien in Ridley Scott's 1979 film *Alien*. Some lines are dense, layered in one place like electric cables, while spaces surrounding these paths are open, revealing the pinks, oranges, and blues, of the backdropped sky.



Janne Höltermann Planes C-Print, 31x48", 2016

I was surprised to see another of Mandle's series places between Höltermann's. Four photos placed together, Mandle's Green presents another series of lines, shadows, and corners. Presented from several angles, the constant throughout the images is the plastic railing that stretches across the wall.

The lines in Mandel's photos pairs the familiarity of everyday moments with the distortion of nostalgic, almost dreamlike unease. Her photos explore lines through the ends of walls making way around a corner, the edge of walls meeting the ceiling, and rails spanning across the wall. Each photo's skewed, forced perspective, unnatural to interior photography also enacts a strange sense of motion.



S. Billie Mandle Green 4 20 x 25 panels, archival pigment prints, 2016

Still accompanied by Höltermann's ocean wave soundtrack, I take a step back and examine the gallery at large. Observing how the snapshots can be categorized by shape, line, and movement, I am overwhelmed by the sense of how we move in water, slowly and without capability to move directly and orthogonally.

Lines that Fade and Flutter was on view at Proof Gallery in South Boston November 18th, 2017- January 13th, 2018. For more information, visit <http://www.proof-gallery.com/exhibitions.html>

All photos courtesy of Proof Gallery and the artists.

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