

REVIEWS

Marc Hundley

TEAM GALLERY

Marc Hundley's works are as compactly evocative as a concert flyer and as cryptic as a yearbook quote; some are carefully made to resemble the DIY concert posters often found stapled to telephone poles on city streets. For "Joan Baez Is Alive," his show at Team Gallery, the sheets of paper with band names, snippets of lyrics, quotes from books were given lots of room to breathe on the gallery wall, with stern but generous white benches in front for repose and contemplation. That the benches resembled pews seemed deliberate: We were invited to consider something we only partially understood, akin to the mysteries of the liturgy.

What we might possibly derive from such contemplation is provisional, to say the least. Hundley pairs his lyrics and quotations with dates and places (often Roebling Street, in Brooklyn) of significance known only to him; presumably they indicate when and where he last heard a song, read or remembered a book, saw or discussed a film. But since we don't know for sure—nor do we know Hundley's reasons for memorializing these specific items in the first place—the works frustrate, like advertisements that withhold the thing you are meant to desire. The works' resemblance to show flyers (and the mainstream advertising that has borrowed from that aesthetic) suggests they serve as advertisements for a singular self, for some closely held element of personhood. The tension between those two poles—between the publicness of advertising and the privateness of memory and taste—is one we see enacted every day in hundreds of Twitter and Facebook updates: the self assembled through what we now call "likes," the cultural items of which we approve.

As a self-portrait in the age of online profiles, the exhibition appears to ask that we decode, assess, link meaning to meaning, try to figure out the person whose hand is behind it all, a not entirely satisfying endeavor, given how superficially such "likes"—of cultural output, of brand names—trace the contours of self, how insufficient they are to the task. On first view, it feels that we are meant to admire the taste of the persona behind the works, his sophisticated preferences in music and literature and art. But many of Hundley's references are within easy reach: the Smiths and the Magnetic Fields, folk stars such as Joan Baez and June Tabor, and such introspective writers as Virginia Woolf. Together evince a kind of teenage agony and melancholy, while a still of Gena Rowlands in *A Woman Under the Influence* contributes a harrowing edge. A work featuring a Xeroxed photograph of Jay DeFeo's three-thousand-pound relief-painting *The Rose*, 1958–66, suggests a complicated history of effort and futility.

What is a good deal more affecting is the sense that each work represents a single moment pulled from an endless tide of sensory input, the images, sounds, and references that form our reality. They grasp after moments of lived experience, attempting to pin down time as time flies by; the artist's choice of a format similar to posters or flyers, by their very nature ephemeral, creates a curious circle of avowal and disavowal. A real flyer, set by the door and meant for viewers to take, asks us twice, rather plaintively, to "come back." Or perhaps the plea is addressed to time itself?

—Emily Hall



Marc Hundley,
*A Woman Under the
Influence*, 2011, ink on
paper, 12½ x 16½".