

TABOR ROBAK

Sunflower Seed

Opening: 26th of May, 5-8 pm

Exhibition period ends: 9th of July

Gallery opening hours:

Wednesday – Friday 11 am-5 pm, Saturday 12-4 pm

Johan Berggren Gallery is pleased to announce *Sunflower Seed*, an exhibition of new works by New York-based artist Tabor Robak (b. 1986). Running parallel to his exhibition at Team (bungalow) in Los Angeles, US, this is Robak's fourth solo show.

For the show, Robak has conceived of four new digital artworks, each of which generates its imagery live via a dedicated custom-built PC. As a result, the works are durationally infinite; the likelihood of any moment repeating itself is a statistical impossibility. This body, as shown in both Malmö and LA, represents a notable departure from past exhibitions, in which the works primarily consisted of looped video. Additionally, whereas earlier pieces have always contained identifiable points of visual reference – appropriating imagery from both real-world and digital sources – the contents of *Sunflower Seed* are the product of the artist's newfound interest in the seemingly oxymoronic possibility of programming abstraction.

The show's title obliquely refers to a coding technique called the "random seed," a number fed to a pseudorandom number generator. Although true randomness is impossible to program, this method allows for the appearance thereof. In the case of these artworks, Robak has chosen the exact time and date, down to the millisecond, to act as seed digits, introducing a peculiar and invisible relationship to real-world temporality. By simultaneously evoking nature in the sunflower, the artist draws a parallel between organic growth and his coding, both of which operate according to differing kinds of parameters and algorithms.

These pieces seem to ape certain aesthetic elements from the history of painting, but Robak's intention is not to comment on that medium – instead, he attributes those similarities to comparable creative ambitions, resulting in shared compositional and coloristic choices. By recontextualizing elements of the more traditional medium, the artist explores the powerful potential of computers as not only tools, but active agents in art-making – in a sense, he is teaching machines to paint.

The temporally uninhibited access these works provide viewers to the "creative act" explicates the shortcomings of mechanically unassisted human production. The artist is not, however, unaware of the sacrifices his work makes to participate in the technological vanguard: *Sunflower Seed* carries a permeating sense of nostalgia, founded in the impermanence of the on-screen imagery, and, implicitly, the transience of all technological innovation.

This exhibition is Tabor Robak's first solo outside of the US, his fourth overall. Previous exhibitions have been rapturously received, including reviews in *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Art Observed*, *Modern Painters*, *Interview* and *Mousse*. He was also the subject of a feature article in the November 2015 issue of *Artforum*. He has been featured extensively in group exhibitions at galleries and institutions both stateside and abroad, including the 12th Lyon Biennale; Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome; The Albright-Knox, Buffalo; MoMA: PS1, New York; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf; Migros Museum, Zürich.

The gallery would like to thank Team Gallery and José Freire for making this project possible.

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