

# Furlough

## Off Duty at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, July 2011

Michael Day

George Eksts

Lesley Guy

Dale Holmes

As artists we are constantly working or thinking about our work. Even at rest we are working, thinking, researching or collecting. For the Burlington Club suite we have developed a show that explores the idea of art that is at rest or no longer functioning, or to be more precise, art that is off duty. By this we don't mean failure, for in order to fail an element of striving is implied, we are aiming for a new form of success, one that is latent. This can be expressed in a desire to drop out or refuse to conform to accepted notions of success; or in the way the work functions, through misappropriation or re-contextualisation. It might be in the way the work was made, casually, accidentally or in the artist's own time. *Off Duty* considers the ways that art and artists can disrupt the imperative to keep making, keep working, and the idea of art that may – or may not be – at work.

When Michael Day isn't being an artist, he teaches art at a University in the midlands. The work he has produced for *Off Duty* consists of a selection of prints of empty spreadsheets that were originally made to help organise teaching times and staffing levels for his second year students. Spreadsheets are not the ideal tool with which to produce a timetable, so these graphical layouts are already representative of a mismatch between tool and task. Their presentation here as aesthetic propositions further robs them of their organisational function and offers them up as visual reminders of structural demands that encroach on his art practice from his off duty time.

The organisation of time is a key factor in the production of *Dream Scaffolding* by George Eksts. The artist produced each of these invented signs for imaginary scaffolding companies to a strict ten-minute time limit. By tying the language of art theory with the prosaic visual languages of the construction industry, *Dream*

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*Scaffolding* hovers between the commercially expedient and the implausibly absurd, occupying a space where work and non-work, and art and non-art, might coexist.

Much of Lesley Guy's drawing work is time consuming and technically exacting, for this show she deploys a looser, more liberal style. Guy's approach takes fliers and leaflets as a surface of existing forms, which serve as starting points for semi-abstract ramblings. These are doodles, not made out of boredom, but in response to the absurdity of advertisements and the quantity (and quality) of the information they offer. Defacing this kind of material renders its status uncertain, and transforms it into something both humorous and abject, both valuable and worthless.

Dale Holmes paintings invite us to consider the relationship between value, skill, and quality. The paintings shown here were made at home, at night after work. Coming at a point in his practice where new visual language was being explored and restrictions were being broken down, these paintings intentionally use a specific vocabulary of colours, forms and materials without restriction. By testing his own taste, the artist asks us to question our own attachment to good workmanship, and to the moral value invested in the labour of art.

Michael Day & Lesley Guy

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June 2011