

## Edward Chell: *Common Ground*



Edward Chell *Willow Projection 2* 2019 Acrylic and lacquer on Gesso on 1/4 size Euro pallet (each 60 x 40 x 15cm)

**16 November - 14 December 2019**

**Private view: Friday 15 November 6-9pm**

For Edward Chell's first solo exhibition at the gallery, the artist presents a selection of wall and floor works exploring a conflation of the precious or revered with the overlooked or discarded, questioning how our ideas about taste are inherited. The works explore themes of consumption and waste, through the aesthetic elevation of ordinary objects and industrial landscapes such as weeds, transportation pallets and spoil tips.

Chell's floor works comprise highly polished paintings supported by transportation pallets, employing the aesthetic of blue-and-white porcelain to depict the repeated imagery of regularised weeds; transforming the peripheral into the 'art object'. Some pallets are placed in pairs (*Willow Projection I* and *II*) and use Spode's Willow Pattern to elide landscape, taste, surfeit and waste in the cabinet spaces they suggest.

The large nine-panel floor piece, *Common Ground*, echoes the aesthetic of minimal art, at once suggesting porcelain-surfaced tiled flooring, wallpaper, or an insistent plantation of painted rows of individual weeds. Seen from above, the positioning of the panels on the floor subverts the hierarchical values associated with the traditional display of art.

Alongside the floor pieces, works on paper and canvas frame the desolate vegetation that permeates and surrounds our industrial landscapes. Oval canvases, a picturesque convention redolent of Victorian landscape depictions and the C18th Claude glass, seem to suggest ways through these edgelands, but the spaces themselves have unclear vanishing points. Visual elements from the Potteries, such as flower forms used in Spode transfers, appear as silhouettes and are combined with images ranging from St. Austell's Sky Tip, a large spoil heap of china clay colloquially known as the Cornish Alps, to Sellafield's nuclear waste dump.

Amid increasing awareness of how our consumption impacts on the environment, *Common Ground* reminds us that C18th mass consumption, the collecting and fetishising of goods for display, sowed the

**Danielle Arnaud**

123 Kennington Road London SE11 6SF UK T/F: +44(0)20 7735 8292 [www.daniellearnaud.com](http://www.daniellearnaud.com) [danielle@daniellearnaud.com](mailto:danielle@daniellearnaud.com)

Opening times: Thursday to Saturday 2-6 pm and by appointment

seeds of our current ecologies. The combined impact of these diverse works is both a celebration of covetable materials and a critique of rampant acquisitiveness.

The exhibition will be accompanied by an essay by artist and curator of MOCA London, Michael Petry.

**Edward Chell** is a London-based artist working across media and a Reader in Fine Art at UCA, Canterbury, Kent. His work explores ideas around taste, consumption and display and their relationship to environment with a particular interest in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the interplay between discovery, natural sciences and the decorative arts. Chell's previous exhibitions, such as *Bloom* at the Horniman Museum and Gardens (2015) and *Soft Estate* at Bluecoat, Liverpool (2013) and *SpaceX*, Exeter (2014) interrogated related themes of ecology, edgelands, material and environmental exploitation and display and their C18th roots which this exhibition builds on. Recent group shows include *Synthetic Landscapes* (Meadow Arts 2018), *The Brownfield Research Group* (AirSpace Gallery, Stoke 2018) and *The Precious Clay* (Meadow Arts 2019). He recently curated the exhibition *Phytopia* at Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Swansea (2019) accompanied by a book of the same title.

**NEXT:**

**Kathleen Herbert** *A Study of Shadows*

Private view: Friday 17 January 2019 6 - 9pm

18 January - 15 February 2019

**For more information and images please contact us.**

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