

Art Review:

Erik Frydenborg: 'Distant' by the Distant

By: Andrew Berardini

'Distant' by the Distant is the lost album of a little-known shoegaze/space jazz/ postpunk ensemble that used to open for Sun Ra's Arkestra and the Smiths. They've since been picked up and championed by maximalist emocore kids and minimalist postrockers, who are attracted to the intimacy, the pastel interiority and the quiet, nuanced posturing of 'Distant' by the Distant. A museum about this forgotten band has just sprung up, founded by one of the act's most cultish adherents, a former couturier who cut her teeth at 10 Corso Como and the Dover Street Market after receiving her degree in feminist semiotics with a dissertation on post-Marxist interior design. This institution does not carry fan items, news clippings, original instruments or signed press images; it's a poetic representation of 'Distant' by the Distant, physical manifestations of its most abstract and inward songs. Combining her academic and commercial background, the founder attempts to examine and expand the virtuosity and attention to detail of the album, the 1960s cool bent into unreal angles. It's a great homage by an astute devotee, arranged with scientific precision for its angular components.



Erik Frydenborg, *Tom Tom Tempo*, 2010, lightjet print mounted on Sintra, 104 x 76 cm (framed).
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Courtesy the artist and Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles



Erik Frydenborg, *Motor City Collection (Closeout)* (detail), 2010, latex rubber, nails, 203 x 193 cm.
Photo: Robert Wedemeyer. Courtesy the artist and Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

In the exhibition, the merchandise plinths painted the colours of ice cream, mostly rose sherbet, dot the space with added scoops of pale wintergreen mint mixed in here and there. The arranged pedestals sometimes bear reconstituted moulds of themselves, their forms collapsing ever inward. Collages from vintage girlie magazines and ancient seascapes and instructional manuals have been magnified until what might have been a sexy swathe of leg looks like a distant mountain on the edge of the frame. The how-to on one wall doesn't attempt to explain anything, except itself, and maybe just how to read this exhibition. The insides of boxes have been moulded and hang on the wall all together. The titles of these works sound like songs off an album: *Stereo Liquidation*, *Shades Down*, *Botanas*, *Tom Tom Tempo* and *Motor City Collection (Closeout)*. A shish kebab of coloured shapes protrudes from the floor in front of a dirty sheet, like a floor mat or a tired shade from a depressed brothel. Other objects extend throughout like props for a performance or scenes from a play about postmodernist sculptures impersonating merchandise stands whose products are impersonating modernist sculptures. When it's not the slippery surfaces of repurposed images and shapes, it's the cracked and broken interiors: one work stretched on a wall uses moulds from the insides of corrugated boxes, their transit complete, their insides stretched out like an animal skin. 'Distant' by the Distant is full of mordant humour influenced by sweet pop jangle and a whisky-broken heart, but arranged like a museum for looking ever inward and closer.



Erik Frydenborg, *'Distant' by the Distant*, 2010 (installation view). Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.
Courtesy the artist and Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles

Truth now: there is no band, there is no post-Marxist decorator fanatic. But there is the title of the show by Erik Frydenborg, 'Distant' by The Distant, the play of sound and meaning in this phrase, and there is the exhibition itself, this stage set of plinths and pictures, an ambiguous outcropping for a nonexistent museum for a nonexistent band wholly invented by this writer. Having fleetingly come into being as I wandered through the exhibition, detailed honestly above, both the band and their museum survive only in this review.

Erik Frydenborg: 'Distant' by the Distant is on view at Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles, through 15 May