



REVIEW - 17 OCT 2017

Amanda Ross-Ho

Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York, USA

BY DAN FOX

'Even a stopped clock gives the right time twice a day.' That stoner koan from the 1987 comedy *Withnail & I* floated into my mind while looking at Amanda Ross-Ho's solo show at Mitchell Innes & Nash. Twelve large clock faces, scrawled with colourful brush-marks, and pencilled notes-to-self, line the walls. The dials are missing their hands. These are hung in a forlorn line, each set to half-past six, near the entrance to the show. If the clock faces tell us that time is one subject of Ross-Ho's show, then the dirty, outsized wine glasses, cups, forks, art materials and tools scattered across two big tables in the centre of the gallery tell us that scale is her other topic. (It's a recurring theme throughout her work.) This is further emphasised by the crass adolescent 1970s t-shirt slogan that Ross-Ho appropriated for the title of her show; 'My Pen is Huge.' So, time and scale. Or should I say: timescale. Stoner mind blown.



Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Timepiece (5 IN THE BOX)*, 2017, silkscreen, acrylic, gouache, coffee, wine, and graphite on canvas covered panel, 1.3 x 1.3 m. Courtesy: the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

Phrases scrawled on the dials and tables, haloed with red wine stains from the giant glasses, and daubs dumped from brushes overloaded with paint are measures of Ross-Ho's thinking. Big ideas mingle with everyday to-do lists: 'SETTLING FOR THE CRUMBS OF A FAKE CONDEMNATION.' 'CHANGE BANK ACCT.' 'HYPERBOLE EPIDEMIC.' 'GRAPSEED, JOJOBA, AVOCADO...' 'INSTITUTIONAL FIDELITY.' 'DECIDE FABRIC', 'COSMETIC MANTLE.' 'STUFF PATTERNS ETC. STUDIO.' The kind of mental gigantism and miniaturism that we all grapple with. Does God exist and where in God's name are my front door keys? What is love and shit I forgot to buy milk and is Little Richard still alive? Banal thoughts, stupid thoughts, thoughts best kept to yourself. Thoughts that keep you up at night and thoughts that sustain a lifetime of art-making. By inscribing hers on the surfaces of the works in this show – all

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made in situ using the gallery as a makeshift studio – Ross-Ho stages for us process and method in all its workaday glory.



Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Hands #4 (HOUR, MINUTE, SECOND)*, 2017, plated and powder coated CNC cut aluminium, 158 x 24 x 3 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

With their bold-face serif numerals surrounded by darts and squiggles of primary colour and covered with Ross-Ho's spidery handwriting, the clock faces give her show the air of a chaotic horologist's workshop; perhaps an inventor straight out of H.G. Wells or Jules Verne, on the brink of a breakthrough in time-travel or a breakdown of the mind. (One dial, numbered in a heavy Helvetica, looks more like a vandalised clock in a modern Dutch train station.) These busy surfaces scream urgency. You can never transcribe enough thinking and compress enough making onto these surfaces, they seem to say; or put another way, there is never enough time in which to do all you need to. Art occurs in fits-and-starts; it's made across periods of boredom and excitement, compressed into moments of intense activity and stretched across spells of necessary dormancy. And as the radically mis-scaled glasses, tableware and marks on the tables suggest (echoes of Claes

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Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen's gigantic pop sculptures perhaps), with the passing of that time, events and things grow and shrink in importance. The significance of the occasion you had that bottle of red wine with a friend in the studio grows huge in memory, dwarfing the meaning of the drawing you felt pleased to have made that same day. All of which is to say: nothing in Ross-Ho's show was really news to anyone who has experienced being human, but she delivered that old news with good humour and generosity.

Main image: Amanda Ross-Ho, 'MY PEN IS HUGE', installation view at Mitchell-Innes and Nash, New York, 2017.

Courtesy: the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York