



'Newly Laundered Smile', 2012, installation view

*"I met a traveller from an antique land / Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone / Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand, / Half sunk, a shattered visage lies..."*

The first four lines of Percy Bysshe Shelley's 1818 poem 'Ozymandias' – which relays a tale about the statue of a king that lies ruined in a far-off desert where the city over which he reigned once lay – were quoted in the audio text that accompanied Gabriele Beveridge's first solo show at Rod Barton. Listening to the recording of the text, written by Paul Kneale and narrated by a woman with a soft Californian drawl, Shelley's 'sunken shattered visage' captured eloquently the material contradictions that exist in Beveridge's sculptural assemblages. Mining images from back-issues of *Life* magazine and aged advertisements, the young London-based artist employs a precise use of framing, propping and hanging that allows the images to sumptuously trip off the salvaged objects on which they rest. The result is an alluringly tactile interplay between found image and object that demonstrates a honed consciousness of the material quality of images and their power to interrupt the display of an object.

*Newly Laundered Smile I* (all works 2012) is an assemblage of things that don't quite add up and yet are somehow pulled into a whole. A sepia image of a female model – it has the feel of a cosmetics ad – is printed onto an old vinyl screen that interrupted the entrance to the gallery. Hinged out from the wall, its steel frame allowed the image a cool sun-bleached complexion, beneath which a row of cacti hovered as if a mirage from the hot climes that the plants recall. In its counterpart, *Newly Laundered Smile II*, a similar image on vinyl was mounted loosely, curling away from a tall pane of glass; propped vertically against the gallery wall, each corner of the pane rested on a glittering chunk of amethyst crystal.

The nostalgia attached to 'firsts' is potent in *My First Nikon*, where a scattering of Vogue cigarettes redolent of teenage cool rests upon a vintage Nikon camera, alongside a glass-mounted photogram. 'More than a photograph and yet less than a film [...] the precise crossing point between cinema and photography' was how Roland Barthes referred to the photogram. The presence of this no-man's-land medium within the exhibition felt entirely apt in light of the transitional states that Beveridge's works are built on – images caught via a fleeting moment in history belied by organic crystals formed over centuries.

A eucalyptus log (*My First Nikon*), slabs of marble (*In A Normal World I'd Be There*), an amethyst (*Newly Laundered Smile II*) – many elements here had undergone material transformations that predate by centuries the array of the images which populate Beveridge's unquestionably contemporary assemblages, creating a finely tuned tension between her subject matter and medium. Perhaps it's this canny interweaving of contexts that represents the laundering process conjured in the exhibition's title – the colliding of histories through objects where, in the case of *Newly Laundered Smile I and II*, the artist's sculptural appropriation of once-glossy advertising images lends the works a sense of speed, as the eye negotiates the material interruptions of the image, giving a heightened awareness of looking.

Two small works nearer to the back of the gallery emitted a hazy youthful charm. *Gabrielle* takes its title from a film-star shade of red Chanel lipstick, the glossy black packaging of which sits lightly along the top of a frame enclosing an illustration of the Grand Canyon drenched in a double-rainbow. It lends the scene a fantastical new-age shimmer and a feeling of longing to be there that slips between the coloured stripes of the rainbows. The work recalls a sensibility for surface that was tangible throughout the show – be it in the seductive sheen of cosmetics or the artist's use of mass-produced reproductions of the sublime. This approach is familiar in London at the moment, with artists including Alice Channer and Anthea Hamilton employing printed material as sculptural forms where, in Hamilton's words, 'Flatness is expanded from 2D into something 3D via the time required to add facts to the objects.'