



# (AFTER) EDGE CITY

William LaChance

Friday 27th April - Saturday 26th May

(After) Edge City refers to a concentration of loosely associated shopping, commercial, and other (un)related businesses that displace a previously suburban area, one which is located apart from a traditional 'downtown'. The term was coined in the '90s by Washington Post reporter Joel Garreau, who argued that the 'Edge City' was rapidly becoming the foundation of urban growth in the 20th and 21st centuries. Above all, the Edge City represents both an inevitable and displaced sense of international growth in urban centres: pushing residential inhabitants outward and creating somewhat illogical megacentres, located near highways and more ubiquitous in their appearance than downtowns.

One immediately recalls various lynchpins of Modernity - Le Corbusier's impact on modern living in the 20th century and its ramifications in terms of Modernist art and architecture; from Calder's mobiles to Picasso and Bracques' Cubist Movements. Ideologically, these modular and modernist ideologies were challenged and even refuted, giving way to dystopian worldview presented in film, from Antonioni to Godard and even 1970's American schlock film like Logan's Run. But what suggests is a world view as utopian and a reaction to that world view as improbable - as the '90s arose and this utopia gave way to something much less glamorous, offering instead a gridlock of cities and commercial centres typified by their absolute lack of ideology. It is, in short, pragmatism triumphing over idealism.

Nearly half a century later, the ideology of a Modernist utopia seems stylised, even nostalgic, a recollection of images and a pastiche of often-amusing visions of a 'future perfect. So it seems wondrously nostalgic, even slightly and satirically retro, that William LaChance - who is a Professor of Studio Art & Art History - is commenting, quite wryly, on this nostalgic look at a utopia, a utopia as imagined by those Modernist forbearers before us. For LaChance, utopia is deconstructed into parts: a glimmer of light off a car-hood, some text from a road-sign, a planar slice of blue - perhaps suggesting the horizon. The pictures in this exhibition are associations of displaced forms and colors cribbed from graphic design, fashion, art history and nature itself cobbled together using a variety of methods and materials from painting and printmaking to assemblage and sewing. The paintings themselves have shifting hierarchies of similar concerns: of material exploration, abstract identity, formal space and narrative expression. But they suggest a type of longing, albeit acknowledged, for that imagined - never realized past. It is more 'Judy Jetson' than 'Total Recall', with its flattened, pop-sensibility and candy colours.

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William Lachance is best known for his brightly coloured figurative and abstract work. His figurative paintings explore the enveloping space behind and around isolated figures; to look beyond what is depicted and to create a unique narrative. Lachance's abstract paintings however, flirt with the ideas that take place on the surface. The narratives still appear, however, they weave their way through abstract forms on the way to somewhere right in front of the viewer. Usually taking the form of acrylic on large-scale wooden board, LaChance's bold shapes, vivid colours and abstract modernist compositions take inspiration from vintage graphic design and illustration.



WILLIAM LACHANCE (b. 1966, St Louis, Missouri) lives and works in St. Louis, Missouri, USA. He graduated with a BFA from The Kansas City Art Institute and MFA from Indiana University. Solo exhibitions include: Art Athina, Athens, Greece (2017), Rod Bianco Gallery, Oslo, Norway (2017), Direktorenhaus, Berlin, Germany, (2017), Junior Space, Melbourne, Australia (2017). Group exhibitions include: Housa Gallery, Two Person Exhibition (2014), SIBA Gallery, New Abstract Works (2014), 'Observing The Observer' with Anne Rowe, SIBA Gallery, (2013). LaChance first showed with BEERS London in the group show '75 Works on Paper' in 2017,