

Forgive me

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I want to start by thinking about distance, the distance between two people and two places, the gaps between fragments aligned on a wall. Distance as a precursor to nostalgia; nostalgia as an outcome of reminiscence.

At first glance, it's hard to tell the difference between the two bodies of work, as the space between them is slight. For a moment within the exhibition *Forget me, forget me*, the work of Patrick Lundberg and Richard Frater existed in absolute relation to one another—the later as a reproduction of the former, the former as an index for the later. Across the 11,000 miles between their respective cities of Auckland and Berlin, their exhibition began as a collaboration exploring reminiscence as a form of appropriation—a process more personal, more akin to the recovery of a memory than a detached form of adaptation.

It was during the artists' conversations leading up to the exhibition that Frater lost one of Lundberg's painted shoelaces, a work he had lived with for five years. The story goes that his flatmate had been the one to throw the painting away, not recognising it for what it was. An easy mistake perhaps, but one that irrevocably changed the course of their conversation, setting in motion a process to replace what had been lost and see what could—through new forms—be found.

Within the gallery space of North Projects, distance does not present itself immediately. Encounters feel too intimate, too close to hand among the sequence of small rooms. It is Lundberg's paintings that embody this intimacy further, distilling space into a single line, folding sides that never existed into a slim width. Lundberg has continued his use of shoe laces as kind of readymade canvas, testing the boundaries set by this choice of material with his own minimal gestures and discreet marks. Tracing delicate lines down the wall, the paintings present themselves as abbreviations of that very form; an exercise in just how narrow a surface can be presented versus how much attention it can garner.

Each of Lundberg's works address a single tone, at most stretching to a neighbouring colour across alternating bands. Red is paired with burgundy, orange with apricot, white with yellow. Two shades of grey alternate down a single lace in one room, while in the corner of another white fades down to blue. In thin layers upon the textured surfaces, the paint has sunk, gathered and darkened in the spaces between the woven threads, before being sanded back into and reworked. The edges of each work betray this

layered intent; flaking slightly at the sides where the laces have been lifted from the surface they were first painted on.

While Lundberg's paintings focus on close encounters and the immediacy of details, it is Frater's work that lingers on absence, on the experience of loss and an attempt at recovery. Using the same material as his painted counterparts, Frater works from within the framework of loss, having coveted and gathered discarded pieces of laces from skateparks around Berlin to be carefully cropped, measured and placed, grounded on bands of aluminium. Here, clean lines are broken by the jut of remaining knots and frayed edges. Shifts in tone come from dirt and wear and the actions of unknown bodies from unknown places, the gestures of others. Where Lundberg's laces have remained whole, Frater's are broken. His fragments adorn the walls in compositions that mirror Lundberg's painted bands. These marks and ruled lines suggest a measure, a process of recording, dividing and itemising, evoking an index of time in the distance traced down the walls. Frater's dashes map a less tangible distance, proposing an encounter with a memory that is not our own.

Existing as a placeholder in a space of separation between locations, friends and objects, it is this idea that places his work as inherently nostalgic, characterised by a longing for a past that no longer exists. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but one that enters into a romance with its own condition. Through nostalgia, concrete states of separation become more symbolic, suggestive, both centred on a longing for a place and overrun by a longing for a different time. Where space can be retraced or returned to, it's a time that shapes the conditions for loss to become irreversible. It is only by through a gap in one of Frater's lines that the present enters in. Between two pieces the architecture of the gallery interjects, the chair railing of the main room running through the work—one of many reminders that these rooms were once a home and that more has been lost and found in them than paintings or shoelaces.

To the left of a doorway, one work seemed sat outside of the others. Not a measure—nor a line—but a bundle of pink coloured thread unfurled atop a bright green sleeve. It had earned the nickname 'flower'. Perhaps this was Frater's apology—for what the other works sought to replace, here was a gift to consider.