

CALLUM EATON'S EXHIBITION 'LOOK BUT DON'T TOUCH' TO OPEN IN LONDON.

By Mark Westall · 9 August 2023
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Following his solo exhibition 'Hole in the Wall' at Paris' Long Story Short gallery early this year, where the artist presented a suite of super flat and functionless ATM machines, Eaton returns for a London debut featuring an expanded selection of the oft-overlooked street furniture and urban architecture that populate the artist's hometown. Imbued with an acute awareness of conceptual art developed during his time at Goldsmiths and a wry critique of the ever-increasing commercialisation of contemporary culture and 21st-century society, Eaton's artworks are self-referential to their own superficiality.



Inhabiting a world reduced to two dimensions, these everyday objects intended for our interaction – their coin slots, keypads and buttons eagerly awaiting use – appear rather as readymades. They retain their form but lose their function. Akin to the austere Constructivist art of the 20th-century Soviet Union in their objectification of industrial and urban design; Futurist monuments to the now-outdated modern marvels of the technological world or even entertaining that Formalist tendency to assess an artwork purely on its aesthetic appearance or visual construction. Geometric Abstraction, sans abstraction.

Street-side telephone boxes made all but obsolete by mobile phones and now regularly removed by councils and city planners remain as reliquaries to unrelenting digital advancement. Coca-Cola vending machines replete with Warholic repetition expose Eaton's labour-intensive like-for-like replication of on-demand appeasement, while elevators from the artist's own City of London located studio space retain eerie echoes of their former life ferrying bankers and business people. Employing that trompe-l'œil trickery popularised by French genre-painter Louis-Léopold Boilly – whose portrayal of overlaid sheets of paper was selected for the Paris Salon of 1800 – Eaton doggedly documents his everyday environment, each painting becoming a new piece of his Sims-esque city-building expansion pack.