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Art Toronto 2023

Booth C73

October 26 - 29, 2023

Benjamin Langford

“The tulip is beautiful, because we meet with a certain finality in its perception,
which, in our estimate of it, is not referred to any end whatsoever.”

- Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*

“I always notice flowers.”

- Andy Warhol

Benjamin Langford’s solo presentation for Art Toronto presents eight new works from his *Flowers* series. The individual works are comprised of many photographically printed canvas panels, sewn together with waxed thread. Larger than life, the flowers hover in seeming defiance of gravity, draped delicately on pins, hanging with confounding sculptural repose.

When shooting the floral source material, Langford uses a technique called focus-stacking, a process native to commercial product photography, in which layers of multiple exposures render the flowers in exquisite detail. Controlled studio lighting acts to replicate the way light and shadow exist in the space of the gallery—blurring the distinction between depicted space and physical reality.

Approaching these works, one experiences a sweeping shift in perspective. Ensnared in their vibrant glow and hallucinatory texture, one sees no longer as a human but rather as a bee: a vector of primal desire. The flowers seem to seduce overtly, their sex organs beckon and our gaze is suddenly that of a pollinator. As peripheral awareness dissolves, the sculptures melt into a field of pure optic experience. The petals pulse like the capillaries on your outstretched palm at the precise moment when the acid hits.

Langford’s flowers provide a precarious kind of purity. They are meticulous hyper-representations, ostensibly reveling in nothing but their own innate being. However, upon close inspection, the objects begin to unravel, as the physics of the image, light through a lens, fractures into a melange of painterly abstraction. Tonguing a technological threshold, the flowers test the limits of a machine’s capacity to articulate reality. Larger-than-life, their seductive forms whisper softly of our bifurcate desires: our dream to possess the world and the longing be crushed beneath its heel.

Benjamin Langford (b. 1992, Connecticut) lives and works in New York City and graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2014. Solo exhibitions include: *Flowers*, 2023, Baader-Meinhof, Omaha; *Nature Morte*, 2022, Baader-Meinhof, Omaha; *Late Summer*, 2020, Special Special, NYC and *Wilt*, 2019, 182 Avenue C, NYC.