

Alex Mackin Dolan
Particle Accelerator of Angels
November 8 - December 22, 2017

David Lewis
88 Eldridge Street, Fifth Floor
New York, NY 10002

Lost times, green paradises where only adults
who have become children may enter.
– Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*

In Scott Cawthon's game *The Desolate Hope*, sentient computers, called Derelicts, were sent during an age of wealth and ambition to simulate future human habitation on an extraterrestrial world. The project was abandoned and, decades later, the Derelicts, having run for too long, became riddled with viruses and corrupted code, and began doing elaborate and bizarre things to relieve their endless solitude.

This scenario offers an introduction, or access point, to the world imagined by Alex Mackin Dolan in *Particle Accelerator of Angels*, his second exhibition at David Lewis.

Rather than celebrate digital culture and its utopian potential, Dolan instead assumes the disappearance of these—and all—human worlds, and imagines the abandoned remains of our civilization as if through the eyes of an expired, insane artificial intelligence.

Of course, this future is also already now our present, as Silicon Valley has already begun the process of codifying elements of life into predetermined tokens, to a kind of digital child mind, and a conspiracy of making things less complex: Conversation reduced to repeating slogans, games reduced to repetitive addictive time wasters, content reduced to iconic exchangeable platitudes to quickly and legibly signal lifestyle and position.

Inspired by such figures as Kai Krause, Paul Laffoley, and the Neo-Geo artists, Dolan mines digital culture (particularly video game culture) in order to present an assemblage of strange ruins, hybrid worlds, and self-generating games, laden with symbolic systems whose meaning has been abstracted from its normal appearance and reduced to exchangeable symbolic tokens.

Most of the works in this show resemble, sometimes vaguely, gambling cabinets, board games, or slot machines.

The games are abstracted from their normal appearance and made from wood. It is as if these are handmade prototypes. Dolan reimagines the promise of a bright future as the malignant inhuman dementia, in the future, of the sentient computers, who survived the catastrophe. This handmade, 'archeological' quality, further complicates the typical art-world narratives about digital art and its bright, slick, shiny, cheery look. Dolan's work is about de-saturation, about aging, about dry matte finishes rather than glossy idiocy of shiny digital surfaces. His work proposes a paradoxical (or perhaps inverted) virtuosity of grey and brown, a dun landscape, a patina of organic decay, a slow silent gathering of dust.

It goes without saying that the apocalypse, or catastrophe, assumed by the artist is ecological in nature, and that the destruction is planetary in scope.

Alex Mackin Dolan (b. 1990, Colorado) lives and works in New York. His work has been exhibited internationally, including: Serpentine Gallery, London; Swiss Institute, New York; 89Plus curated by Simon Castets and Hans Ulrich Obrist, LUMA Westbau, Zurich; Park Avenue Armory, New York; Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Oregon; Plymouth Rock, Zurich; David Lewis, New York; Bedstuy Love Affair, New York; Karma International, Zurich; MACO, Oaxaca, Mexico, among others.