



HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS

## **Consistencies**

**An exhibition by Sean Crossley**

### **Harlan Levey Projects 1050**

46 Rue Jean d'Ardennestraat,  
1050 Brussels, Belgium

Opening: 08/09/2022

Exhibition: 08/09 - 22/10/2022

### **Consistencies: An Exhibition by Sean Crossley**

*Consistencies* addresses conventional notions of 'the consistent' or 'the coherent' within the dimensions of (self) expression, commerce and contemporary media. It's conceptual approach to painting and affinity for humorous world play, build on Sean Crossley's first exhibition at Harlan Levey Projects, *Recreational Painting*, and his more recent presentation at the WIELS Center for Contemporary Art, *Renovation de la Bourse*. The exhibition presents an elaborate effort to affirm curiosity and pursue the alien, the original, and unrecognizable through two new suites of paintings. The distinct pair of components in the exhibition propose alternative sets of consistencies by integrating notions of framing, segmentation, repetition, and transaction into both the subjects and production of the paintings. Crossley attempts to elaborate and disrupt traditional genres and decorative formats within the cannon of modern/contemporary painting, whilst pushing this material into relationships with other domains, specifically those of agriculture and the service industry. The somewhat duplicitous character of the works in this show playfully nudge the industrial decadence of Baudelaire into the post-digital age, the cloud, a time where everything and everyone must be available and coherent at all times.

### **QUOTIDIEN PAIN**

For this project, Crossley purchased two baker's trolleys to make, store, and frame paintings. Each trolley has gastro-norm slots intended for trays, which have been replaced by canvases prepared to appear as smooth as the trolley's steel. While often a frame responds to a painting, these paintings respond to this unusual frame. Bread or croissants seemed too literal as subjects, so this flour was replaced with flowers arranged between the tradition of vanitas and innocuous, 'flowery' painting. Each set of racks now serves up a cycle of 15 selected flower species, which seem to melt into the lustrous canvas, fusing the illusion of foreground and background into an indivisible material, an alloy like the steel itself loaded with flowers that neither grow nor die. The shapes and forms of the flowers painted for this work have been selected from François Couplan's fieldbook *Encyclopédie des plantes sauvages comestibles et toxiques de l'Europe* (Encyclopedia of edible and poisonous wild plants of Europe). Each is painted with pigments composed of lead and iron, suspended in oil milled from the seeds of a variety of flora. One rack repeats the content of the other, as Crossley mimics the baker's repetitive routine, making his daily bread and acknowledging the quotidian pain of impossible consumption.

HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS 1050 46 rue Jean d'Ardennestraat, 1050 Brussels, Belgium  
HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS 1080 65 rue Isidoor Teirlinckstraat, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

[www.hl-projects.com](http://www.hl-projects.com)

[info@hl-projects.com](mailto:info@hl-projects.com)



HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS

## CEREAL

In his 1987 essay 'The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race', the anthropologist Jared Diamond posits that it was not humans that domesticated nature, but the other way around, as he illustrates how a specific mutation of wheat plants proposed an alternate mode of organizing space, time and labor. This ancestral encounter with a mutated wheat grain produced a fundamental paradigm shift to mercantilism, speculation, domestication and eventually adornment of private space. Beginning with an electro-microscopic image of a wheat grain, *Cereal Space* resembles an image of vast natural space that is unreasonably organized as it spreads across ten panels abstracting itself into a glitched topographical model or bacterial expanse. Separated, the panels resemble formats of 19th century decorative painting tailor-made for spaces between doors and wall corners in apartments. When lined up side by side, their totality produces an image resembling a landscape, or a slice in the earth's crust. This is a sedimentary painting of terrestrial materials; oils from plant seeds, ground earth and metal pigments, layered upon a ground of condensed petrochemical gesso literally distilled from thousands of years of compressed organic matter. The brushstrokes, textures, layers and corrections are perhaps a diagram of the broader temporal scale of how the materials themselves came to be. This genealogical dimension of the materials renders an image of a reality without illusion, the result of a somewhat beautiful complicity between entropy and commerce.

## ABOUT Sean Crossley

Sean Crossley (b. 1987, Australia) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. He uses painting as a practical means to explore different relationships between abstraction and realism, both of painting as an artistic discipline and within a broader social field. As such, it is concerned with both the intrinsic workings of paintings within their own historical continuum, as well as the way they operate as (conceptual) objects embedded in an overarching visual culture. While often considered as binary, Crossley's painting points to a correlation between the abstract and realist, which is much more complex and composes itself in reciprocity. Like a feedback loop, subjects which are often quotidian or conventional, such as faces, objects, or public spaces, are gradually weaved into or fused with other matters or systems. Tangible on the surface of the painting, where the pentimento reveals haphazard connections between different subject matters and compositions, it is equally present in the dialogue between the different works and their interaction with their immediate surroundings. Following the exhibition *Recreational Painting* at Harlan Levey Projects in Brussels (2019), Crossley took part in the residency programme at WIELS Centre for Contemporary Art, Brussels. In September 2021, his exhibition *Rénovation de la Bourse* opened in the same venue.

HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS 1050 46 rue Jean d'Ardennestraat, 1050 Brussels, Belgium  
HARLAN LEVEY PROJECTS 1080 65 rue Isidoor Teirlinckstraat, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

[www.hl-projects.com](http://www.hl-projects.com)

[info@hl-projects.com](mailto:info@hl-projects.com)