



TORONTO
MKG127

ADAM DAVID BROWN

by Pete Smith

In art, there is meaning in labour. Intrinsicly connected to artistic process, the amount of labour put forth by an artist plays an important role in shaping our understanding of any given artwork. Andy Warhol famously mimicked Fordian assembly. Sol LeWitt often gave instructions to galleries where others realized the art. The details of medieval illuminated manuscripts revealed the devotional nature of the artisans—the roots of a Protestant work ethic on display in every hand-drawn character. The works of Adam David Brown at MKG127 were in conversation with all three of these models. Although Brown's connection to Warhol and LeWitt is more visibly apparent, it is his connection to the latter that is most compelling.

In *One Time or Another* (2014), Brown cuts circles out of 42 sheets of multihued indigo papers. There are three of these pieces. In *Reflection* (2013), Brown removes ellipses out of 110 sheets of mirrored Mylar. In *For The Time Being* (2013), Brown cuts out large-scale Times text, leaving the remnants of this surgery sitting along the bottom of the frame. Despite the fact that his geometric cuts could be performed by a die-cutter and the text pieces by a laser-cutter, Brown meticulously hand cuts these papers, which relates to the broader frame of his thematic concerns.

All of the works focus on ideas of time. Although many recent artworks deal with time on a human scale (through concepts such as history or nostalgia), Brown's notion of time is grander. Thematically, his works have more in common with Stephen Hawking than Anselm Kiefer. The exhibition title, "For The Time Being," is rooted in the popular expression but also cleverly inverts the wording of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. In *LIFE* (2014), Brown draws the word "LIFE" in Pink Pearl eraser. In *One Time or Another* he cuts up 19th-century astronomical star charts. In *Salt, Sand, Time* (2014), he pours salt on top of black sand (as in an hourglass) to recreate the Rosetta Stone. In each work a vast thematic profundity unites the scope. Since the Middle Ages, when Christian monks first saw physical labour as a means of contemplating divinity, there has been a connection in Western culture between hard work and profundity. Brown tethers this continuing connection with his own calloused fingers.

27 August 1822,
11 O'clock - Noon,
Looking Eastward,
Large Silvery Clouds,
Wind Gentle at S. West

Adam David Brown *For The Time Being* 2013 Gypsum
1.26 x 93.3 cm
PHOTOS TONI HAFKENSCHIED

ABOVE: Adam David Brown
Reflection 2013 Mirrored Mylar
1.21 m x 86 cm