

Art reviews: Alex Dordoy

By: Moira Jeffrey | February 1, 2014

Alex Dordoy: *persistencebeatsresistance* | Inverleith House, Edinburgh | Star rating: ****



At Inverleith House another Glasgow-trained painter Alex Dordoy has a major show of new work, his most significant in the UK to date. Dordoy, who now lives in London, is a highly accomplished artist – a painter whose radical technical innovations, including complex transfer prints, the use of digital images, and a complicated relationship between two and three-dimensional forms match a sophisticated exploration of the role of the image in the virtual age.

For a century now there's been a debate about what it means to make an original artwork in the age of easy reproduction. Dordoy plays with this persistent problem by taking it apart. A number of works in the show have their origins in the corpse of an ordinary commercial photocopier. The artist has disassembled it, cast its entrails in silicone rubber, or embedded its body parts in plinths with elaborately decorated surfaces. In one of a series of works entitled *Congsumer* the copier's glass copyboard is wedged into a plinth like a sundial and is echoed by a real burnt-out laptop, an Apple MacBook Pro, embedded in a similar work in an adjacent room. Are these screens completely empty or might they be imprinted with the thousands of images they have processed during their useful lives? Do images have a soul or can they preserve our own? There is a huge amount of complexity in Dordoy's work, including his use of elaborate print techniques, where every contact leaves a trace.

Upstairs, gallery walls are lined with the kind of corrugated polycarbonate used as lightweight building material. You can see where all this is coming from. Despite its translucence it has a strong physical presence. It is both two and three-dimensional, and it relates to recent bodies of work where the artist has shaped images in the form of a concertina or paper plane in evocation of the way that digitisation compresses images. But you can't help but wish Dordoy had been able to present some of his signature large-scale paintings or a wall drawing. It's unfortunate that something – whether time scales, exhibition budgets or just bad luck — means that while this exhibition has absolutely thrilling passages, its overall framing falters a little.