

Bogdan Ablozhnyy: Pedestrian Space

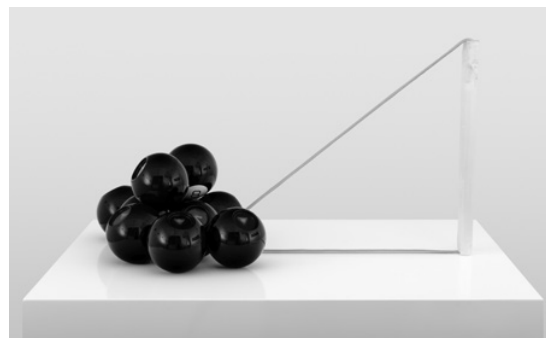
a.Squire, London, 6 June to 18 July

The title of Bogdan Ablozhnyy's exhibition of sculpture and photographs, 'Pedestrian Space' (all works 2026), is taken from a text by Fred Sandback in the late 1960s in which he lights upon the term in an effort to identify a site more amenable to art than the rarefied atmosphere of an institution: a space in which an artwork could find its place alongside all other everyday things. In Robert Rauschenberg's words it is the gap between art and life, or the zone of Tony Smith's drive down the unfinished New Jersey turnpike at night, where all is present but not yet fixed or framed. What they wanted was art that led to an active encounter with the world around them, where one might discern, as Sandback writes, 'the utopian glimmering of art and life happily cohabiting'. This mix of the quotidian and the marvelous echoes in the title of Ablozhnyy's three-part *A Man of Dreams and a Man of Actions*, a vertical pole, clad in sections with strips of different vinyl, which runs the height of the gallery. Hanging from the ceiling close by is a pair of monochrome piñatas, one a sphere, the other a star. Firefighting and dancing, of course, but the sectioned pole also recalls the multicoloured rods carried by André Cadere on his peregrinations.

Yet the key to this show is *Duration and Simultaneity*, which comprises two strips of elastane fabric – black with a blue stripe running slightly above the centre line – stretched over long, narrow wooden frames. To fit onto the wall, the panels sit one above the other. If placed end to end they would span a distance equivalent to that travelled by sound in 1/100th of a second, roughly equivalent to the duration of a camera click. Though the panels have the same dimensions, the unstretched fabric strips are of slightly different length, one being marginally less taut.

Ablozhnyy walks and looks and gathers: a selenite crystal from Death Valley, the assorted vinyl found in LA's fashion district, piñatas spotted for sale in the local stores, countless sights captured on camera – five of which, recovered from an old hard drive, are shown here (all *Untitled*). A street scene, light traffic on the road, people walking on the pavement, stiletto-shod feet glimpsed under the cubicle divider in a public toilet, the detail of an Italian bus roof, a corridor in Ablozhnyy's old school in Russia. Each image occupies the upper right-hand corner of an A2 sheet of paper, sized according to the proportion of time Ablozhnyy devoted to his art activities on the day it was made. Otherwise, the paper is blank, save for an occasional graphic mark – a short vertical line, or a small rectangle. The marks are differently coloured: magenta, green, red and so on. The format of the scaled image and surrounding blank space gives a quiet nod to Pierre Bourdieu's diagrams of the field of cultural production. The intersections of time and labour that comprise this photographic series also make it clear that Ablozhnyy is alive to the fact that the joyous ease that Fred Sandback sought has always been compromised. Throughout the exhibition, the artist appears conscious of the social realities that undermine the imagined autonomous field of art production, where structures of power continue to be organised by the asymmetries of someone's class.

These imbalances are also explored in the sculpture *And Say the Animal Responded?*, which takes its title



Bogdan Ablozhnyy, *And Say the Animal Responded?*, 2026

from a 2008 essay by Jacques Derrida that questions the possibility of establishing and maintaining a clear distinction between human and animal: by what right do we deny all qualities of thought, reason or sensation to an animal, while arrogating them all to ourselves? *And Say the Animal Responded?* is a standing right-angled triangle; one section is made of selenite crystal; the other two sides are lacquered horsehair from a violin bow. The work has been altered from its previous showing last year: a viewing device has been replaced with several Magic 8 Balls heaped up at the foot of the triangle slope and arranged so that their viewing screens are visible as a jumble of divinations – 'My Sources Say No'; 'Cannot Predict Now' ...

'Pedestrian Space' is an exhibition full of rhythms. The blue and black of the elastane and Magic 8 Balls, the line of the elastane panels, the lines on the prediction screens of the balls, the line of the floor to ceiling pole, the magenta line articulating the white field around a photograph, the sphere of the balls and the piñatas, the white fields of the photographs and piñatas. It is a rhythm of open and enclosed spaces – the balls full of predictable predictions, the empty piñatas, the zip running down the length of the pole extend the tantalising promise of revelation.

Gilles Deleuze wrote of walking one foot on the pavement, the other off it. This minimal asymmetry is the same pedestrian space from which this art unfolds, Ablozhnyy making a ripple in the elastane to dismantle the theory.

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Augustus Serapinas: Physical Culture

Nottingham Contemporary, 6 June to 6 September

Exercise has always involved more than the human body. Every training regime presupposes an apparatus: an assemblage of machines, measurements, instructions and ideals through which subjects are formed. Augustus Serapinas's *Physical Culture* brings these processes into view, transforming Nottingham Contemporary into a space where the bounds of physical training, artistic education and institutional participation become difficult to disentangle.

Operating both as title and object of study, *Physical Culture* feels less like the title of an artwork than the description of a discipline. Arriving with crowds for the private view, I am met by an assortment of angular, steel-framed sculptures dispersed across the two galleries, each modelled loosely on an item of exercise equipment. In place of weights, white jesmonite heads of classical