

SEANKELLY

Keh, Pei-Ru. "Black and white?: Sean Kelly showcases the hyperreal paintings of James White," *Wallpaper*, February 11, 2016.

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THE STUFF THAT REFINES YOU

Black and white?: Sean Kelly showcases the hyperreal paintings of James White



Sean Kelly's current exhibition 'Aspect: Ratio' throws the spotlight on the London-based artist James White. Pictured: Aspect/Ratio #7, 2015

Situated in New York City's evolving Hudson Yards district, Sean Kelly might be a little off the usual gallery path. Still, with artists like Marina Abramović, Los Carpinteros, Antony Gormley and Kehinde Wiley represented, it certainly has no lack of visitors passing through its sprawling, two-floor space.

As the location for this month's Joseph Kosuth fashion story (p.150), Kelly's striking setting epitomises contemporary New York just as it represents contemporary art. Designed by the architect Toshiko Mori, and situated within a historic building dating from 1914, the gallery is flooded with natural light thanks to its recognisable floor-to-ceiling windows that wrap around on two sides.

Equally enticing is its current exhibition 'Aspect: Ratio', which throws a spotlight on the London-based artist James White. Intricately executed black and white paintings depict everyday scenes and objects, such as plastic water bottles, a hotel room minibar and bathroom, and a deflating helium balloon, with fine verisimilitude. Armed with a realism reminiscent of the Flemish masters, White's hypnotic paintings possess a photographic quality that infuses the seemingly mundane subjects with an undercurrent of suspense.

In this new body of work, White takes this photo-like intensity one step further. Some paintings feature pairings of seemingly disparate scenes, separated simply by blank, grey panels that emphasise the arbitrary cutting and cropping of images. A possible comment on digital vs analog disciplines, these breaks add a separate dimension to the nature of contemporary visual language.

'James White's exceptionally complex approach is simultaneously hyper-realistic and abstract,' Kelly says. 'He's developed a very unique vision – a highly contrasted black and white palette, omitting visible brushstrokes – that transforms what might initially be seen as straightforward scenes from everyday life into evidence of a more cryptic narrative, fraught with psychological tension and suspense.'



Intricately executed black and white paintings depict everyday scenes and objects. Pictured: Aspect/Ratio #8, 2015



In this new body of work, White has incorporated blank, grey panels that emphasise the arbitrary cutting and cropping of images. Pictured: Aspect/Ratio #9, 2015



Some paintings feature pairings of seemingly disparate scenes. Pictured: Aspect/Ratio #5, 2015



Each image comes tinged with an undercurrent of suspense. Pictured: STILL #4, 2015



White's work possesses a realism reminiscent of the Flemish masters. Pictured: STILL #2, 2015