

Tedd Nash Pomaski

BOSE PACIA

In “At the Foot of the Lighthouse,” Tedd Nash Pomaski presents new drawings in which images, while generally recognizable, struggle against their facture. Picturing nocturnal highways and roads, hospital examination rooms, and ocean waves, Pomaski filters his careful draftsmanship through an array of mediating strategies, some preliminary, others visible on the surface of the work. The cumulative effect is of a veil or glare that slows but never entirely cancels out the processes of looking and comprehension. Areas of darkness—of which there are many—surrender their depth as in an overexposed photograph, while fine details are always conscientiously suggested but never fully rendered. Only in one series, however, does figuration dissolve entirely, becoming pure line.



Tedd Nash Pomaski,
Untitled 1, 2010,
graphite on paper,
12 1/2 x 12 1/2". From
the series “Waves
in Isolation,” 2010–.

Pomaski’s drawings, all in graphite on paper and shown here unframed, are predominantly built from columns of short, parallel, horizontal strokes. Other artists, from Chuck Close to Ewan Gibbs, have made extensive use of similarly programmatic approaches to assembling an image from elemental abstract components, but Pomaski still manages to claim a territory for himself—though one that doesn’t immediately seem to offer much room to maneuver. (There are also strong hints of Troy Brauntuch in his predilection for grayed-out obscurity, and of Vija Celmins in his uncolored allusion to photorealistic precision.) Pomaski embraces the distortion inherent to the digitally manipulated photographs and videos from which he works, aiming to travel some distance from what they depict. Visually, at least, he succeeds, subtly intertwining the traces of each step. Metaphorically, the results are at times more problematic.

While an atmosphere of dread lingers around deserted roads and life-support technology, the effect has been diluted somewhat by over-use. It is impossible to look at *In Darkness (Lies Secret Knowledge)* (all works 2010), for example, without feeling the breath of precedents from Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Still #48*, 1979, to David Lynch’s *Lost Highway* (1997) on the back of one’s neck. (And Pomaski’s title,

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albeit surely self-aware in its overt gothic romanticism, does nothing to fend off such persistent ghosts). The artist himself posits such scenes as warnings against evoking the unrecoverable past or unknowable future at the expense of the here and now, but though his idea is sound, its communication here is itself buried under layers of tangential and perhaps distracting reference.

Avoiding this trap by eliding context and hewing closer to the abstract, Pomaski's series "Waves in Isolation," 2010–, renders oceanic breakers as swaths of light and dark (though, as always, the density of the latter is limited by the delicacy of the artist's application). Here, the works' associations—the flicker of animated meteorological radar, the variegated bars of a DNA profile—feel at once less culturally predetermined and closer to the exploration of data and its interpretation that was reportedly uppermost in the artist's own mind. The more Pomaski collapses perspective by directing our eye toward evidence of facture, the more clearly we also sense his process's conceptual implications. Taking this to a logical extreme are four drawings titled *Untitled Static Field*, each a block of stacked lines, that evoke Agnes Martin in their quiet, handmade take on Minimalist paring-back.

Rounding out the exhibition were three variations on the latter series, each made in collaboration with one of the artist's friends. Aaron Houser adds an abstracted skyline to one small work, while Nathan Dilworth cuts up and reassembles another. Finally, Tyler Page Berrier pulls a William Burroughs, blasting a third example with buckshot and leaving it peppered with holes. Though presented as afterthoughts, these playfully destructive experiments suggest that Pomaski boasts a healthy awareness of the limitations of his practice, and seems likely to expand beyond them.

—Michael Wilson