

Nicolas Deshayes

Cultural Wood

HAYWARD CONCRETE CAFE

24 June – 25 July 2010

London-based artist Nicolas Deshayes (b.1983) has described the objects and images he has introduced into Concrete and the balcony of Dan Graham's *Waterloo Sunset Pavilion* (2002-3) as prioritizing 'a slick game of seduction'. Taking his exhibition's title from Jean Baudrillard's essay *Natural Wood, Cultural Wood* (1993), the artist has responded to the design conventions of these environments and the feelings they attempt to engender, from frothing excitement to giddy floppiness. In these works, however, the prompting of consumer desire has gone somewhat awry, and what Deshayes has called 'an excess materiality' has taken over.

On Concrete's interior walls, Deshayes presents a series of vacuum-moulded plastic panels entitled *Backdrop for Display* (2010), which mimic the wood-grain effect found on the Hayward's Brutalist exterior. We might imagine that they are an industrially produced image display system marketed at aspiring, design-conscious consumers – a form of 'cultural wood' that becomes doubly 'cultural' with the introduction of a carefully selected picture. The nearby photograph *Near Future Brewing* (2010), depicting one of the café's soup tureens in the fetishistic fashion of magazine food photography, might be a possible candidate for such treatment were it not for its faint air of organic material on the turn, something it shares with the slumped stained glass forms that appear to splash against the café's window like the dregs of a cold latte. Entitled *Resistance to Near Future* (2010), these works might be understood as an uneasy response to Liam Gillick's *Who Controls the Near Future? Applied Complex Screen* (1999), a piece sited on the other side of the glass. Immediately above Concrete, Deshayes has hung several sheets of pliable plastic decorated with frosted vinyl dots from the balcony of Dan Graham's *Waterloo Sunset Pavilion*, as though Graham's steel and glass construction has begun to lose its rigidity, or has unexpectedly produced a semi-liquid excrescence. Operating as a kind of connective tissue between the pavilion and the café, they suggest the functions of these two sites may not be so far apart as they first appear.

Tom Morton, Curator, the Hayward Gallery

The artist would like to thank Extruflex,
Stephen Webster Plastics, and Talbot Designs.

