

## Elliott Hundley

*Regen Projects, Los Angeles 12 April – 17 May*

Since 2006 or 2007, just after he earned his MFA from UCLA and began to gain serious institutional recognition – *Eden's Edge* at LA's Hammer Museum; *Unmonumental* at the New Museum, New York; *The Shapes of Space* (all 2007) at the Guggenheim Museum, New York – Elliott Hundley has relied heavily on straight pins as a kind of signature material. Those pins have held together, precariously and variably, accumulations of all kinds of flinty detritus, from photo cutouts to Styrofoam insulation, and this work walked a fine line between painting, collage, relief and sculpture, though Hundley made singular moves into each of these genres as well.

His new work is more self-consciously painting and sculpture. The pins are mostly still there, of course – what would a contemporary artist be without a signature material standing in for style? – but the precarity is not. Instead, Hundley has toned down the manic accumulations in order to more earnestly address composition, which has the best works coming out as straightforward, considered, compelling abstractions – and lacking pins! – such as *Silent*

*Factory* (all work 2014), which channels the palette of a Frankenthaler while weaving in the feel of Rauschenberg's *Canto* series (1958–60). *It Will End* is another good example, tipping as it does over into the anamorphic dreamscape of some lesser-known science-fiction set designer.

The confidence manifest in these paintings is matched in the ribbonlike meshes of a series that Hundley calls *Scaffold*. Perched above rough-hewn wooden ladders, these works are composed of lengths of heavy-gauge bronze wire held in near parallel by solders of the artist's signature straight pins. Like some latter-day 'cold structures' of a Karl Ioganson, the *Scaffold* works are constructivist in their simplicity and transparency, yet resolutely bourgeois in their aesthetic – one wishes Hundley would have made these with something other than the pins, which, even as 'found objects', remain too closely identified with his self-legislating and self-marketing 'I'.

One also wishes he had left behind the two biggest works in the show, *Destroyer* and *The Hesitant Hour*, both large, four-panelled tableaux

that rely too heavily on staged photographic portraits. The images are clumsy, and for all their supposed theatricality, the works come off as quick and amateurish. They play at being big, but bear none of the balance of the abstractions.

From the other direction, pieces such as *Changeling* and *The Sound of Its Own Ringing* are too fussy and bogged down with little images and incident. That Hundley has broken into the surfaces of these largely two-dimensional works – the centre of *Changeling* bears a double fan-shape accordion fold; the centre of *The Sound of Its Own Ringing* appears pierced and shattered – suggests that they somehow buckled under their own weight and needed these moves into relief to salvage some sense of coherence.

'When in doubt, keep working it' is not a mantra Hundley should stick to. Whether the unevenness here is a fault of his needing to fill a big space or just a lack of self-critical judgement in the studio doesn't really matter. The modestly scaled but hugely effective abstract paintings and sculptures are enough to keep one wanting to see more. *Jonathan T.D. Neil*



*It Will End*, 2014, inkjet print, oil and paint and paper on linen, 198 × 152 × 5 cm.  
Courtesy the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles