

Time Out London

Jack Lavender: A Hardcore Stomping Flashback



★★★★

The Approach. ► May 31.

This is one slick show – quite literally. The gallery floor is so slippery that you have to tread carefully to keep from falling over the densely strewn, glossy, loose sheets of paper. Every page is identically printed on both sides with a photograph of footprints in

mud. It's a kind of conceptual joke by Jack Lavender. The young London artist is using images of real ground to create a wholly artificial surface.

This sort of playing with reproductions and ersatz versions is everywhere in this exhibition. A solitary wall assemblage features plastic bones and glass bunches of grapes affixed to a rusting iron support, while at the other end of the room crumpled sheets of steel

contain imitation wooden branches and metal casts of onion rings. Gradually, the feeling you get is of the natural world being incorporated and commodified – until any feeling of naturalness is lost, and all that's left is absurd, chintzy artifice.

Of course, it's hardly a revelatory idea that we're all becoming increasingly alienated from nature. But Lavender is good at alluding to the anxieties beneath the bright veneer of contemporary culture. Leaning against a wall are several tall glass panels featuring abstract swirls, while around the edges are little cartoon feet, like the comic book motif of a figure exiting the frame. Jutting farcically out in all directions, the disappearing feet bring us back full circle, suggesting once again that we're in danger of losing our proper balance, or simply of falling away from reality altogether. *Gabriel Coxhead*

THE BOTTOM LINE Mind your step: this art is slippery, conceptually and physically.