

Kayne Griffin Corcoran

carla

Snap Reviews

Michael Bell-Smith at Kayne Griffin Corcoran



Michael Bell-Smith, *Flames Clock (Left)*, *Flames Clock (Down)*, *Flames Clock (Up)*, *Flames Clock (Right)* (2016). Custom software. Scale variable: 9:16 ratio. Image courtesy of the artist and Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles. Photo: Robert Wedemeyer.

Time is a shapeshifter. In moments of boredom or discomfort, it slowly plods along, while elsewhere it feels palpable as it slips through our grasp. In Michael Bell-Smith's hands, time floats antiseptically, suspended in a world of licking flames. His four-monitor video *Flames Clock* (2016) has a *Yule Log* sort of lassitude to it: the flames on each screen pull in different directions while the clipart clocks on each tick away in unison. Like Christian Marclay's *The Clock* (2010), real time passes before us in a 24-hour loop.

Around the corner, a second set of videos uses time as a mechanism to reveal repetitions. The pieces, *De-employed* (2012) and *De-employed_2016* (2016) utilize a repeated set of 15-second audio and transition sequences, though different images inhabit each rotation. It takes a minute or so to catch on to what's happening. The pattern emerges slowly, but once it's understood, the repetition becomes the catalyst for making sense of the onslaught of random images (many of them metajokes about the internet, pop-culture, or politics). Time becomes a means of being in on the joke—chuckling to ourselves as each repetition in the video occurs with a new surprising image accompanying it.

Elsewhere, Bell-Smith's grayscale vinyl-on-aluminum pieces feel less inspired. Betwixt colorful moving images, these black and white static compositions feel like wallflowers at the disco. Here, the ability for 2-dimensional artworks to freeze a moment in time feels like a limitation. Instead, the videos—like Dorothy turning to color once in Oz—allow for a fuller picture of the aptitudes and constrictions of time itself.