

Andy Boot

C C

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The letter C has a pleasant and simple form — basically a round shape or circle, opened on one side. Its doublet, CC, in common contemporary use, is a function in e-mail programs to co-send to multiple recipients. The name derives from the old analog technique of the carbon copy, referring to a usually bluepigmented paper that was used to copy a handwritten or typed action, an individualized and simple method of reproducing. Considering the existing abbreviations in digital media, CC could also stand for the Spanish/Italian double affirmation “Si, Si,” either showing deep approval or disregard.

Andy Boot is a stoic artist, with a finely tuned and reduced output, in which time and again patterns loom large. A pattern is a discernible regularity, where forms, symbols, and colors repeat in an anticipated manner. What underlies the pattern, what shapes its character and interval, would be its grid. A bigger part of Boot’s work circles around those patterns, or symptomatic surfaces say — forms, symbols, shapes, and colors appearing on the skin of things, and the reasons that bring them there.

In his current show at Croy Nielsen, Boot deals with patterns carried out by scrap-like objects. The patterns, building the chorus of this show, appear on printed metal sheets. They are rooted in the customized backgrounds of Geo-Cities, a former Web host for personalized homepages. GeoCities peaked at the end of the nineties, in sync with the dot-com bubble, was acquired by Yahoo!, and collapsed in 2009, by which time Myspace and, finally, Facebook had already taken over. Many of the sites came in a digital, collage-like 90s look, garnished with GIFs, and still haunt the Web today as retro chic. For its time, GeoCities had a symptomatic, simplified logic, divided into sections or “neighborhoods,” with themes of professional and private everyday associations, that were reinterpreted, such as “Capitol Hill” as a political section, “Vienna” as the classical music area, “Pentagon” and so on.

Some of the patterns used as backgrounds for the sites mirror the themes; other ones are just abstract, colorful, and pixelated. An arbitrary selection of six of them are to be found in the show, taken from an actual online archive showing a cross section of former sites. Flipping through this — of the millions of sites, only hundreds were archived — some of them have a professional intent, e.g., private car rentals. Many of them are quite random attempts, ranging from Black Ninjas, Winnie the Pooh, and a high amount of fantasy related contents or just blog-ish personal introductions involving cats and dogs.

Boot manufactured sculptures with fine fabric-like, metal grids, quite carelessly bowed and dipped into concrete rectangles. We see groupings and constellations of these handbag-sized objects, like roughly crafted hints on classic pop cultural clichés of a “matrix,” where animated things evolve from woven digital grids. But for a more analog observer, the objects could also just remind you of tissue boxes changing shape every time you pull.

Benjamin Hirte

