

# Cheat Notes

## PATTERN RECOGNITION

### Benedict Ernst

Pattern Recognition has long been a cornerstone of research in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The ability to see connections and perceive an overriding order to a collection of miscellaneous data has been posited as central to any conception of human consciousness. In *Pattern Recognition*, Benedict Ernst explores different forms of pattern making as packaging for perception: a way of ordering the world and perceiving order in the world. Although starting from such an experimental/scientific premise, one's experience of the work soon slides rapidly into creative/emotional/poetic areas where the evocative, playful and suggestive become far more important than any rigid ideas of denotation to formulating an "understanding" of the work.

*Pattern Recognition* is also the title of a book by science fiction writer William Gibson and a song by Sonic Youth.

This show taps into the sculptural tradition of the ready-made artwork or found object as pioneered by Marcel Duchamp with his infamous fountain/urinal. And like Duchamp, Ernst explores the idea that the context within which an object sits is as important an element of its 'meaning', use, or relevance as any physical attribute of the object itself. It is about making patterns from the data, about recognition and manipulation of context. As such in *Pattern Recognition*, Benedict Ernst asks you to explore the social networks, the linguistic connections, and the sub-consciously imprinted patterns that we see within objects and the way these reveal the sense we have made of our world.

4 major sculptural pieces make up Benedict Ernst's show. Packaging is once again the major theme, as in all Ernst's work, and each work repackages a variety of found objects into lovingly crafted, glass-fronted crates. From the banal to the unique, from the common to the rare, from the cheap to the priceless a strange congregation of materials inhabit these boxes. And these boxes become windows displaying a mysterious intent. There is the repetition of **Collection**, 12 boxes that house Ernst's collection of "little men" (the "Keep Australia Beautiful" logo found on food packaging and showing a stylised figure "collecting" litter in a bin, obsessively collected by Ernst over a 2-year period). **Collection** draws attention to the conscious and overt process of ordering and social classification that takes part in our everyday perception (as well as poking fun at the construction of Value [particularly in art] inherent in this process of collecting and making "Collections"). Then there is the obscure couplings of **Apophenia**, a term coined by Karl Conrad in 1958 to describe the paranoia-like phenomena of seeing connections between otherwise unrelated objects, this piece plays with another aspect of perception. Rather than pulling together obvious 'likes' to display subtlety of difference, it packages together 'unlikes' in an attempt to display the subtlety of connection. The absurd and paradoxically entitled **Lunacy** makes explicit the theme combining the objects it contains whilst stating that the connections between them are at best irrational. The final work in the show **Self Portrait/ A Day in the Life** is the read-out of an Electro Cardio Gram showing the familiar repetitive blip pattern of the heartbeat and was made by the artist living attached to a mobile heart monitor for 24 hours. In *Pattern Recognition*, Benedict Ernst works engage the viewer in a playful game of interpretation and imagination.

Other things to mention: Joseph Cornell, Gibson's Count Zero (re: Wintermute's creations) and Douglas Hoffstadter.