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## Ralph Anderson

Artist Dominic Beattie on Ralph Anderson's latest body of work presented at JGM Gallery in the new exhibition 'This Is For You', May 2019.

JGM GALLERY

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I was invited to visit Ralph Anderson's newest body of work at his studio a few weeks prior to his exhibition 'This Is For You'. I had no preconceived idea of what Ralph had been making, despite discussing our practices most times we see each other. I was immediately shocked by the minimal nature of the new series, I had never really contemplated how maximalist Ralph's work was, containing all types of gesture and marks they explode with visual energy.

I didn't expect the streamlined things in front of me, but the transition made complete sense and without being obvious, this was obviously the change that should have occurred. This radical reduction in information, pared down to a simple overlapping of squiggly lines was one of multiple paths Ralph could have taken to further progress his work. He has built up an impressive library of content and techniques to draw from as a painter, the new series could have consisted entirely of isolated gloopy expressive brush marks, hard edge geometric tessellation, roller lines, mysterious sprayed marks, or any other of the many styles he has developed.



Ralph Anderson  
*Little Quirk*, 2019  
JGM Gallery

The works are direct translations of tiny rapid sharpie doodles, Ralph showed me hundreds of them in his studio, as we looked through them we could agree on which were successful and which were not. For such little, effortless looking things to be scrutinised is quite funny, but these drawings contain all the content Ralph requires to make his large wall pieces. Through his craftsmanship these drawings would be remade as beautiful permanent art objects. The speed of the doodles conception and creation is in stark contrast to the hard task of realising them large, in perfect cut and painted aluminium.

Ralph's process has always been a mystery to me, I can never unpick the puzzle, no matter how many times he explains how he makes his work, I always struggle to get it, I think it's because he really has mastered his art and found his own unique way to create what he does. What I do know is that they are incredibly labour intensive, and the new ones even more so than the frenetic stylistic mash ups of his earlier pieces.

The casual look of this new series, developed entirely from 5 second doodles, belies the labour of their making. Ralph estimated that it took two full days of cutting to shape one of the larger works, metal on metal, sawing and rasping, it can't have been a pleasant series to make but the finished works betray none of that labour, they are so elegant and complete, they look as if he has pulled the doodle off the paper and slapped it on the wall.



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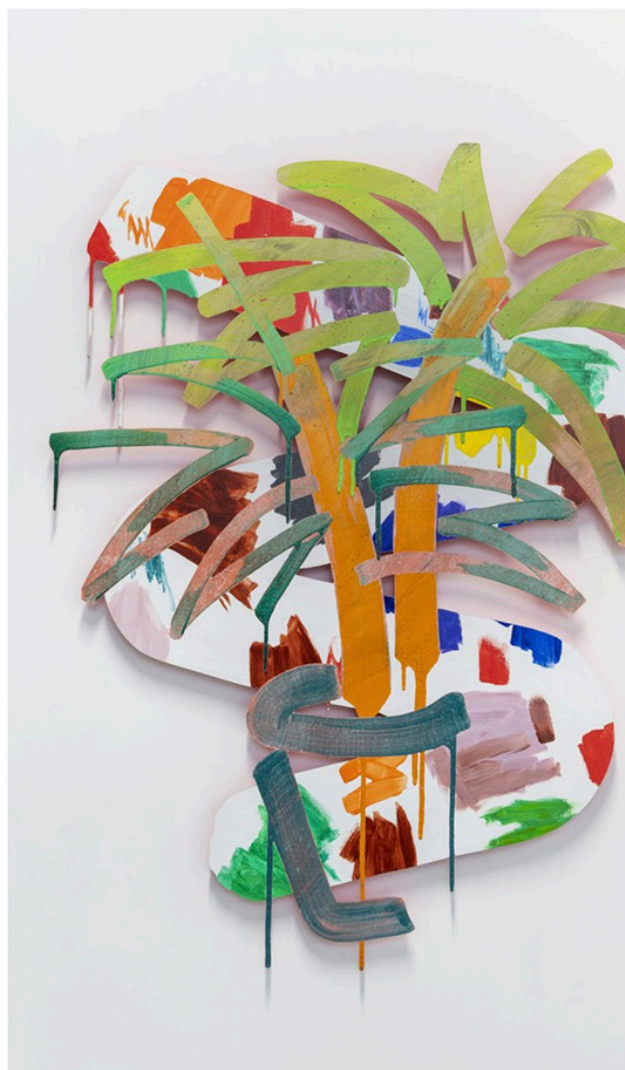
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**Ralph Anderson**

'Ralph Anderson - This is For You' Artsy

May 2019



Ralph Anderson  
*Play Like That*, 2019  
JGM Gallery



Ralph Anderson  
*Time Release*, 2019  
JGM Gallery

Contextually the works echo pop art with their graphic high energy aesthetic, reminiscent of Lichtenstein or perhaps Wesselman, but they also have a deadpan quality that reminds me most of Claes Oldenburg. The act of taking a mundane everyday thing and enlarging it, is a classic abstract trope, drawing notice to the unremarkable. Where Ralph's older work was an impressive exercise in technical painterly flair, this series of fresh paintings are totally representational, trompe l'oeil renditions of marker pen rhythms. Another paradox in the work. What looks completely abstract is actually studied and well rendered representation.

What is most exciting to me about Ralph's new work is the realisation that these simple coloured lines are enough. I think that all good artists reduce, they distill their work and remove the extraneous content. It's something that only a mature artist can do. You have to try everything before you can get anywhere close to making a successful simple piece. Jumping straight to the minimal is pure fakery, years of labour are required before you can make something look as effortless as Ralph has. These works are not made from attitude but from knowledge and skill.

Dominic Beattie, 201