MARK BOYLAN

Slight Distortion
Gildengate House Residency
8 March - 4 April 2021

In his exhibition, 'Slight Distortion', Boylan explores the way depression and anxiety can seemingly crack the veneer of the aesthetic - adding layers of degradation or wear to places or things of beauty that others may not notice. Boylan builds layers of colour and uses differing techniques to add texture and grittiness to the image. While highlighting the subjects beauty but also the cracks, blemishes, missed strokes and disjointed nature of the aesthetic through the mental illness 'filter'.

Despite mental illness being a very real and wide spread human problem, Boylan's subjects are mainly not, infact, real people. Reference face portraits photos were generated by AI from a dedicated website which randomly generates a completely unique face from a huge dataset of pre-existing photographic portraits. Boylan was infuenced by the idea that the subjects were anonymous and therefore offered an more authentic subject, rather than using a 'real' person as a subject whose mental illness is only supposed. Not only this, the future use of AI in society is explored, with the implications of 'artifcial' human and computer intelligence being effected by 'mental illness'.

During his time at OUTPOST, Mark Boylan produced 5 large scale portraits, produced by using larger refllable 'marker pens' that he flled with his own paint mixtures. This was then applied to large sheets of paper, adding spray painted accents and highlights. Boylan chose to use these techniques so that the paint warped and degraded the paper, adding multiple layers of texture and colour while also retaining the vivid shapes and strong lines of the original subjects. Also, more traditional techniques, such as oil and acrylic painting, were used in the smaller scale portraits.