



Zak Kitnick

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by Phil Taylor

ARTFORUM

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Zak Kitnick

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Imagine “Peace.” No John and Yoko here—it’s Zak Kitnick’s exhibition title, and he’s cooking up something more fungible. Visitors are greeted by a poster reproduction presenting a buffet of olive-related products under the heading “L’OLIVE / THE OLIVE.” Titled *Lifetime Achievement* (all works 2015), it suggests the double-sided character of linguistic translations in Kitnick’s enterprise. Proceeding upstairs, steel panels with printed stock photos of olive branches literalize the symbol of peace. How to best distribute this concept in reified form? Press the pictured cash crop into liquid asset: Back downstairs, ceiling-mounted fixtures are ready to dispense olive oil from bottles onto the heads of gallery attendees. Apparently anticipating this eventuality, the other works on the floor incorporate umbrellas. Consider the installation vertically integrated.

Kitnick’s exhibition is a droll burlesque of entrepreneurial mantras in which economic and alimentary figures of consumption collude. In *Water for Chocolat*, folding tables exhibit a grid of cheap umbrellas printed with the printed logo of “Conch U.S.A. Inc.”—in other words, a shell umbrella corporation here diagramming modernist abstraction. You can practically smell Broodthaers’s *moules*.

That initial olive poster is likely sourced from Nouvelles Images, a French publisher of “image products.” On their website, the company’s sixty-year history is recounted through a series of “disruptive” epiphanies, such as “1970: Intuition #2: And what if images, in all their forms, became a market?” Kitnick gives such statements their due in kitsch souvenirs for art tourists. As signaled by the picture *Stressed Desserts*, he adopts the palindrome as a heuristic device for mirroring the logic of reification. The linguistic engine driving the work is hilariously dumb, as if metaphors were being interpreted by algorithmic shoppers. Eventually the laughter dies out, the image market grinds on.



Zak Kitnick, *Lifetime Achievement*, 2015,
UV-cured ink on powder-coated steel shelving,
73 x 48 x 1 1/2”.

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