

ALTERED STATES OF PAINT

5 July 2008 - 7 September 2008

Jutta Koether Till Gerhard Andreas Dobler Angela de la Cruz Neil Clements Rabiya Choudhry

Taking its name from the 1980 Ken Russell film Altered States, in which Edward Jessup (William Hurt) undertakes a series of extreme sensory experiments to find life's meaning, this exhibition is inspired by the idea that certain paintings can promote a visionary experience in the viewer. This notion of the gallery as a gateway to other forms of perception is echoed in Aldous Huxley's The Doors of Perception (1954) when he states 'The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out'.

The exhibition is also rooted in the context of a Scotland in which emblems of a quasi-mystic, neo-pagan landscape surface regularly in fact and fiction - Summerisle from The Wicker Man, the legends of Loch Ness and in particular Aleister Crowley's Boleskine House. Another considerable influence is the newly published novel Sway by Zachary Lazar that fictionalises the real life exploits of the late 60s milieu of Kenneth Anger, Bobby Beausoleil and the Rolling Stones. Overall the show presents paintings in the gallery in ways that respond to the canon in different ways but always in a rebellious, spirited and playful manner. The artists are all at different stages in their career but there are many crossovers as well as contrasts in the formal and conceptual aspects of the work as well as in the motifs used.

Rabiya Choudhry b. Scotland 1982

Choudhry's paintings have a fluid and hallucinatory feel, negotiating a path between fantasy, autobiography and social realism. Images are collaged from an imagination searching for clarity. Using words as well as images, she taps into the invisible codes which subliminally seep into society. With the work Rhabdomancy' - meaning using divining rods to find ore, or "the art of magically deducing some weighty inference (generally prophetic) from any one of the many dark sources sanctioned by Pagan Superstition." (Thomas de Quincey, Confessions of an English Opium-Eater) - Choudhry has made her largest wall painting to date - a vivid, expressive and technically dextrous work.

Neil Clements b. Northern Ireland 1982

Glasgow based Neil Clements' work displays a morbid fascination with testing the limits of supposedly extreme elements of artistic production. '85 and Dee take their shapes from the bodies of customised guitars while the exalted status of the black paintings of Malevich or Reinhardt - a kind of last painting in some eyes - is remade into an homage to other geometric shapes, not just squares. Neil's black square full stop paintings take that last painting stand in abject formlessness when given the addition of a spray can void layer.

Angela de la Cruz b. Spain 1965

In the history of contemporary art the painting has been slashed (Lucio Fontana) and burned (Yves Klein). With Angela

de la Cruz, stretchers are smashed and shoved into corners. In her process, de la Cruz reinvented herself not just as a painter, but as an extraordinary sculptor. The results are exquisite and deeply affecting. With Stuck, Angela has made a work that becomes unique on each presentation as it reshapes to the constraints of the aperture into which it is - literally - stuck.

Andreas Dobler b. Switzerland 1963

Dobler's pictures are coupled with a complex subtext: he references subcultural myths, addressing dream images and values, redolent with broad cultural references. In the act of painting he becomes part of the myth of adventure and lays claim to the discovery of distant worlds. Whether Dobler's remote worlds are psychedelic or exotic or extraterrestrial, the greatest adventure lies in rediscovering them through painting. Turfstones is a threshold painting in the exhibition, taking the visitor from the intoxicating light of the first room into darker chambers.

Till Gerhard b. Germany 1971

Gerhard's painterly eye has been singed by the coruscations of a too-explosive LSD trip. Objects in his paintings either gleam too brightly, or disappear into shadow. Splotches of neon paint dapple his surfaces like retinal floaters, imbuing each work with a hallucinatory aura. Gerhard reveals the dark side of the hippie dream and Solar System is Gerhard's large-scale salute to the cover of the Rolling Stones LP sleeve for Hot Rocks. Healter nods to the Manson Family's love of the Beatles. Other works refer to the legendary 1970s movie The Wicker Man, filmed in Scotland.

Jutta Koether b. Germany 1958

Koether firmly takes the position of a painter but she is also one of the most important artists dealing with expanded practice today. As a musician, she has worked with Rita Ackermann, Tom Verlaine, the late Stephen Parrino, Thurston Moore and Kim Gordon. She will devise a special performance for the 31st of July at 7pm with acclaimed Glasgow based musician Heather Leigh Murray - of Volcanic Tongue, Charalambides, Taurpus Tula and Dream Aktion Unit reknown. Touch and Resist 5 is an extraordinary canvas measuring 7 metres long and referencing Titian and Rubens. Her smaller works directly invoke the spirit of the filmmaker Kenneth Anger and her use of reflective materials - thumb tacks, liquid glass and Metal Maniacs suggest the art of skrying - looking through a glass darkly.

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