

WORKPLACE GALLERY

34 Ellison Street, Gateshead, NE8 1AY, UK
<http://www.workplacegallery.co.uk> <mailto:info@workplacegallery.co.uk>

Hugo Canoilas

Propaganda

23rd September - 23rd October 2006
Thurs - Sat, 12 - 5pm (or by appointment)

Preview: 22nd September, 6 - 9pm

Workplace Gallery are pleased to present *Propaganda* the first UK solo exhibition by Hugo Canoilas.

The exhibition is in 3 parts: "Politics against Religion" is an installation on the first floor of the gallery in which two 150cm walls bisect the space, one on top of the other, dividing the room into four equal spaces. Two of the spaces are 'inhabitable' and two exist purely as an architectural framework. "Propaganda" takes over the ground floor of the gallery. Every inch of wall is covered with giant reproductions of communist propaganda paintings forming the backdrop to a series of minimal sculptures and constructions more used to the surroundings of a white cube. A performance entitled "The Invention of the Bright Day" in which a man recites texts by Almada Negreiros, the Portuguese Futurist Artist and Poet, through a traffic cone on the streets of Gateshead completes the triptych.

Hugo Canoilas is one of the most important artists to emerge from Lisbon in recent years. Renowned for constructing emotionally charged installations of an architectural scale Canoilas' work stems from a thorough investigation into painting encompassing historical allegory, modernist abstraction, and painting and decorating. Implicit in his work are investigations into the formality of colour field painting as intervention and the political and ideological meaning that is drawn out through scale, relationship to site, and awareness of situation. For Canoilas painting becomes wall, barrier, and perimeter. Colour signals a poetic nostalgia in direct opposition to the severity of his post industrial vocabulary, creating a complexity that forces the viewer to look beyond an initial formal encounter with his work and search for a deeper, unsaid, metaphorical relevance.

More recently Canoilas work has begun working with a more overt political and historical referencing. For his exhibition at Workplace Gallery Canoilas has made a significant departure from the usual reductive vocabulary of his practice. This new work confronts ideology head on – instantly providing a space for open dialogue. The compilation and reproduction of some of the most zealously styled propaganda forces us to consider our own political and cultural assumptions. Within the context of Gateshead's Trinity Court Shopping Centre, beneath the grim beauty of its brutal and uncompromising architecture - emblematic of the once progressive utopian hopes of a Sixties modernity, Canoilas work begins to act as a complex and conflicting system of signs and referents, contradicting and reinforcing each other within the gallery space, matched only by the encroaching boundaries of ideological systems of commerce, poverty, religion and politics outside.

Hugo Canoilas was born in Lisbon in 1977; he studied Fine Art at Escola Superior de Arte e Design in Caldas da Rainha, Portugal and at the Royal College of Art, London. Recent exhibitions include: "7/10" at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon; Project Room Cultural Center, Belem; "IDEALondon", at the ICA, London; "English paintings and other works" at Palacio da Ajuda, Lisbon. His work is in numerous public and private collections worldwide.

Hugo Canoilas is represented by Vera Cortes Agencia de Arte in Lisbon, Portugal.

The artist and Workplace Gallery would like to thank the following for their support of this exhibition:




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