

Jacob Dahlgren

colour-time-structure

13th September – 27th October 2012
Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm
(or by appointment)



Workplace Gallery are pleased to present the first UK solo exhibition of works by Swedish artist Jacob Dahlgren.

Jacob Dahlgren's work is concerned with a dialogue between the authoritative singularity of pure formal abstraction and its position within a variable, complex and social shared culture. Dahlgren's repetitious collections of ubiquitous and ordinary objects, often domestic, industrially manufactured (and frequently, knowingly Scandinavian); stand in their gestalt form as proxy for High Modernist Abstract Painting and for all of the ideological territory that Twentieth Century Art Theory has staked out for it. The contributing objects, however, signify a collective and human aspect of society, each representing an individual choice, to be used or consumed in a unique way by its consumer. Together these objects stand for the group or community, and as such they become democratic rather than authored. *Porto 1968* appears at first to be a horizontally striped and undulating relief wall hanging, emulating a brush mark or extrusion of paint dragged across a surface. On closer inspection the familiar profile of IKEA-style plastic clothes hangers becomes apparent, the piece made up of stacks of alternate colours not entirely unlike the methods of display used by the out-of-town warehouse shopping with which we are accustomed. Another work, *Leeds 1982* is made of cheap brown plastic coffee cups, of the kind that might be found in a service station or place of work vending the type of instant coffee resorted to in desperation. The stacked cups (arranged within the standard proportions and orientation of a 'portrait' canvas) form larger vertical stripes that are interrupted by smaller subtler diagonal stripes created by the slight and rhythmic displacement of the plastic handle of each subsequent coffee cup. The titles of these works are made up and added arbitrarily, gently mocking a romantic autobiographical cliché often found in abstract painting - the artist producing his or her work in profound connection with place and time.

In Dahlgren's video work the contingent factors of site, noise, architecture and time are allowed to intrude upon the central formal device. *Non Object* is a collection of videos of people walking around cities followed by Dahlgren shot covertly from a digital camera held by the artist. It quickly becomes clear that each individual is wearing a horizontally striped top. By keeping each person at the same approximate distance in the centre of the screen Dahlgren reduces each person from an object to a motif for abstraction. A dynamic tension is activated between the innocent and disinterested task of fixation upon and collection of a given pattern, and the more sinister emulation by the artist of the serial obsessive and the potential for conflict between the stalker and his quarry.

In a series of video documentations of Demonstrations shown throughout the building the contingent is again given emphasis. The Demonstrations are a series of events hosted by Dahlgren, which take the form of group workshops based upon the paintings of Olle Baertling a leading Swedish Modernist Painter, and an organised and proper demonstration march, complete with Police escort and correct permissions around different cities and places internationally. The Baertlingesque paintings from the workshop are held aloft as placards in a deliberately passive protest, empty of political intent. In doing so the films become documents of a problematic contradiction between the inherent potential readings of a given situation and also a humorous play upon a notion of national identity and national pride.

Jacob Dahlgren was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1970. Exhibitions include: *From art to life to art*, Galleri Andrehn-Schiptjenko; *Forward, Back, Right, Left*, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle USA; *It's a Set-up*, KIASMA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland; *Altered, Stitched and Gathered*, P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center/MoMA, New York. Dahlgren represented Sweden in the Nordic Pavilion at the 2007 Venice Biennale. He lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden.

For further information including a price list please ask a member of staff.

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