

space/socialspace

Eric Bainbridge
Ralf Brög
Lothar Götz
James Hutchinson

29 June - 3 August 2013
Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm
(or by appointment)



Workplace Gallery are pleased to present **space/socialspace** a group exhibition of new work by Eric Bainbridge, Ralf Brög, Lothar Götz and James Hutchinson. Conceived initially as a collaborative project between four artists currently working together within the Fine Art department at Sunderland University *space/socialspace* provides an overarching framework for research that is increasingly focused on issues of space in relation to a public audience, and space (types of space) encountered as physical or immaterial space.

Eric Bainbridge presents '*Spatial Concept (Social)*' a new work in mild steel and woollen fabric that is abstracted from a failed functional structure deployed by a village in Northern France (where Bainbridge takes vacation) to keep trucks from repeatedly driving over and destroying a drain cover - thus resulting in increased council expenditure and higher taxes for the residents.

This mundane socioeconomic object once enlarged, simplified and transformed in scale takes on architectural status that hovers between doorway, ziggurat, bus stop and goalpost. Topped with beige fabric rolled into familiar sausage - like proportion, Bainbridge echoes the tallow of Joseph Beuys and the early knee casts of Bruce Nauman, embracing a soft, materiality that contrasts with the architectural and industrial nature of the mild steel to open up territory beyond the autonomy and authority of historical sculpture towards a social and spatial functionality.

Ralf Brög's ongoing series of works '*Zero RPM Records*' are made by applying wax crayon to the surface of the cut grooves of vinyl records. Selecting records of specific historical and cultural significance, Brög then scans and resizes the image of the record to produce a print that reveals the intricate geometric structure of the musical track tinted by the monochrome colour of the crayon. Brög's linear, mandala-like cartographical works refer reflexively to the iconic cult like status of tracks such as "Higher States of Consciousness" (the techno classic by Josh Wink) or established masterpieces such as "Isoldes Liebestod" by Richard Wagner. Through the interstices of both music and object (vinyl) that defines a cultural or subcultural moment, Brög's work is an investigation into the nature of authenticity and an continued extension of a Duchampian notion of appropriation through a technological age.

Lothar Götz examines the effect of colour in the form of large scale 'wall paintings' on existing or planned architectural spaces. '*The Ghost of the Bauhaus*' is a large work across the full south wall of the gallery space. A geometric composition in three colours (black, silver and pink) '*The Ghost of the Bauhaus*' has clear roots in early modernist abstraction. Götz' work also functions as a kind of extended form of self-portraiture - by proxy. '*The Ghost of the Bauhaus*' is extrapolated from a small drawing by Götz titled '*House for Lena Meyer Bergner*' a flattened architectonic abstract drawing that Götz has designated as a kind of refuge for Lena Meyer Bergner a student of Paul Klee at the Bauhaus in the early 20th Century. Götz' affinity with Bergner becomes both a self-conscious act of empathy with an *other* and, conversely, an extension of the *self* of the artist in and through an other. Through his use of projection into an imagined, historical figure, Götz is able to engage with expressionism and the origins of abstraction without the heroic traps and pitfalls of direct authorship. In this way Götz connects his practice to Classical ideas of art as active fantasy - something practiced as part of a personal strategy to escape from reality.

James Hutchinson's '*O B 1*' short for 'Orange Bag 1' is a video of a cheap orange plastic bag that was caught in the apple tree in Hutchinson's back garden for about six weeks. Part of an extensive and ongoing series of photographs and videos that document found situations in his daily environment; Hutchinson focuses on the abject detritus and remains of contemporary consumer culture. Pared down to three elements: the knarled and silhouetted branches of the apple tree, the vivid orange of the plastic, and the lapis blue background of the sky; this work oscillates between a playful toying with cinematic cliché - nodding towards both '*American Beauty*' and '*Star Wars*' - and with the notion of painting as video and video as painting.

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