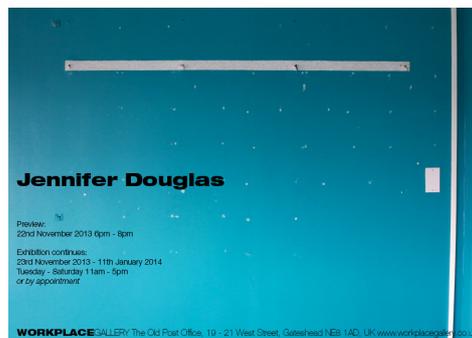


Jennifer Douglas

Preview:
6pm – 8pm Friday 22nd November 2013

23rd November 2013 – 11th January 2014
Tuesday – Saturday
11am – 5pm or by appointment



Workplace Gallery are delighted to announce the opening our second solo exhibition of new work by Jennifer Douglas.

In her seminal 1977 essay 'Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America' Rosalind Krauss signals a shift away from music as the primary influence on abstract painting through the 20th Century, towards photography as a logical and structural model for abstraction via its indexical relation to the world. Citing the exhibition 'Rooms' at P.S.1 in 1976, Krauss argues that the artists in that exhibition (including Gordon Matta-Clark, Lucio Pozzi, Michael Asher etc) employ an indexical relationship to the slightly derelict building of P.S.1 at that time, enabling them to point towards and exploit the pure physical presence of the site. This indexical mode operates through a direct uncoded message rather than a transformed encoded system of referents that ultimately depend on 'institutional reserve': i.e. a language with shared and understood vocabulary and agreed meaning. Earlier in the essay Krauss uses linguistics to contrast shifting, empty and thus always-meaningful forms of denotation such as 'this' or 'that' as opposed to the referent to which the sign points 'this *Chair*, that *Mirror*'.

In *(First) Second Floor* Jennifer Douglas revisits this indexical, photographic mode by flooding the room on the top floor of the gallery with white liquid silicone rubber to create a highly detailed and precise mold of one of the gallery floors capturing the grain of the wood and the trace scratches and scrapes left by human activity. Using a process extrapolated from conventional sculptural mold-making techniques, Douglas is able to re-present the gallery floor - as painting - on the wall of the ground floor exhibition space. Maintaining a connection to the field of sculpture *(First) Second Floor* is presented with the lower part of the cast rubber surface aligned to the shadow gap of the supporting gallery wall - millimeters above the floor. This is a concession to the sculptural world of objects and things - *our* space as opposed to the pictorial frame of the painting as typically isolated within the white wall of the gallery.

Through this oscillation between the two spaces of object and image, *(First) Second Floor*, operates (as is typical for Douglas' work) as a conduit between the real, physical world and the metaphysical space of the imagined or surreal. The experience of looking at the floor is one of ordinary everyday normality made uncanny through a shift in orientation, and distanced full plan overview enabled by the size of the gallery space. The visual effect is one of floating an unusual distance above a floor, like the near death experiences of TV and Film, whilst the sensory stimulus from the body is maintained in its default normal position.

19/21 is a steel and silicone work, which takes its form and scale from a measured linear outline of the steps outside the gallery front door and the height of the doorway, its title taken from the address of the gallery 19 – 21 West St. Rotated 180 degrees and fixed to the wall Douglas shifts a given architectural situation into the gallery space, recoding itself as art, and disguised within sculpture.

Three photographs: *Assemblage (Penthouse 1)*, *Fun*, and *Blue* were all taken by Douglas on a trip to an abandoned British Telecom headquarters in Teeside, UK. Drawn to the place through her research into the origins of language and communication (in particular Morse code) Douglas documents the found situations, composing images constructed from the fixtures, fittings and pinboards of the building through the isolating and framing device of the camera.

If walls had eyes is a 60 x 42 cm painting on canvas that has been painted blue and repeatedly punctured with multiple screw holes and Rawl plugs. Referencing both the *Buchi* and *Tagli* (holes and slashes) of Lucio Fontana's Arte Povera paintings and the romantic escape of the dusk sky this work more specifically refers to a battered old industrial breeze block wall that has been recurrently over-painted and drilled into without consideration for aesthetics or meaning.

Jennifer Douglas was born in 1975, in Amersham, UK. She studied at Newcastle University and Glasgow School of Art. Recent exhibitions include *Surface*, The Civic, Barnsley, UK; *Collecting Contemporary Art*, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead; *Exit Strategy*, Tramway, Glasgow, UK *The Short Score*, DLI Museum and Durham Art Gallery, Durham; *You Shall Know Our Velocity*, Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK; *FANTASTICA*, Grundy Art Gallery & Museum, Blackpool; *ROTATE*, Contemporary Art Society, London; *Northern Futures*, The Civic, Barnsley, UK. She was the winner of 2D Salon Art Prize 2012, and Northern Futures. Jennifer Douglas lives and works in Gateshead, UK.