

Aaron Curry

30 April – 14 June 2008

opening reception on Wednesday, 30 April, 7-9 pm

Aaron Curry (b. 1972, San Antonio, Texas, lives in Los Angeles) in his first solo exhibition at Galerie Daniel Buchholz shows an installation featuring new sculptures, paintings and collages. The technique of collage forms the centre of Aaron Curry's practice. He develops his pictorial language by assembling and layering found images from diverse sources such as magazines, monster fanzines, art books, and film publicity, and equally from a fund of forms whose origins, even if not directly referential, derive from American Surrealism. To do this he in part uses an extreme colour palette reminiscent of the 'School of Chicago' from Ivan Albright to Peter Saul and Jim Nutt.

A point of departure for Aaron Curry's most recent work is the H.P. Lovecraft story, *The Colour out of Space*, which may be the source for his dividing of the objects and pictures in this exhibition into two separate fields, either extreme colour or grisaille. In Lovecraft's story a farmhouse enjoys a phase of luxuriant bloom and saturated colour after being struck by a meteorite. It then dries out to a point where first all the plants and fruits, and then the animals and inhabitants too, lose their colour and finally crumble into greyish dust. The relationship between the extreme, saturated colour of the site where the desiccation takes place, and the structure of the grisaille as the basic framework that only just survives the process of decay, is represented in the exhibition by the contrast between pictures and sculptures. The intrinsic, in part quite figurative forms of the sculptures are given a loose coat of black and white paint, which, either picks out the basic forms with spray paint, or else transforms the individual components of the sculptures into chessboard-patterned surfaces. Grisaille seems here to be the ideal vehicle for the paradoxical, illusionistic aspect of these sculptures, highlighting the interplay of surface and internal space, but at the same time exaggerating it.

Aaron Curry alludes here as a possible reference to a particular camouflage technique from World War I known as 'razzle-dazzle'. It was a technique which, by using Modernist geometric shapes, painted military vehicles in such a way that they were not hidden in the high-contrast sequence of extremely light and dark fields, but their shapes were so obscured, that they could apparently only be located and identified with extreme difficulty. The individual components of Aaron Curry's sculptures in sawn wood are also reminiscent of the canon of classical Modernism, both the paintwork and the figurative interplay of the parts evoking the Harlequin figure, as it appears for example in Picasso's early 20th-century pictures as an iconic representative of Modernism.

The collages in the exhibition consist of figures and faces that are built up from the most varied iconographic sources in layers, so as to underline the general intrinsic quality of the abstract forms of the sculptures and pictures. Aaron Curry seems to be concerned here to prevent the images from coalescing, and to keep all the components materially visible as single entities. This is true also of the abstract forms, which recur again and again in various pictures, drawings and sculptures, like a vocabulary emanating from a foreign source, binding the whole into a single ensemble in the manner of a stage set.