



JOHN HODGKINSON

March 14 - April 15, 2023

Five paintings of quoins by John Hodgkinson.

Quoins are stacked masonry blocks at the corner of a wall. Some quoins are structural, providing real strength, while others add only aesthetic detail to a corner, implying strength and permanence, or even just expense, to reinforce the building's presence.

Hodgkinson's previous paintings, shown last fall at Ramiken's group exhibition in London at the Averard Hotel in Lancaster Gate, depicted slivers of the Georgian buildings surrounding the hotel, the pale stucco rhythms of the facades shining against textured, angular patchworks of peripheral darkness, as if one was peering out from the windows of an unlit building at night - a stalker's vision of neoclassicism.

This body of work focuses exclusively on the corners of those buildings. Each painting is vertical, the neutral colors of the stacked blocks outlined in contrasting gray and navy stripes, dividing the blocks and the decorative moulding which caps the sections. The lines pull a jolting turn into perspective, carving a cropped, jagged corner that juts out of the paintings while also constantly begging to be flattened back into a restrained pattern of tasteful stripes. The different tones of the cream and beige blocks reflect changing values of light and shadow, as the sun passes over the buildings.

There is no redemption for the beauty of these schizophrenic paintings, which operate out of pure pathology. The dementia-nality tightens these works into spikes of visual chaos. The subtle, pointed slices of neoclassicism hang as architectural trophies, stylistic samples of a more intentional built environment at odds with the found-space brutality of the gallery. The paintings put the buildings on a therapist's couch, for a set piece of forensic psychoanalysis resulting in a diagnosis of bad teeth minimalism, stained and crooked and as warmly familiar as any English translation could ever hope to be. If we're talking about teeth, the fetish is for Donald Judd teeth, those straight up and down big white perfect smiles that make it so easy to spot Americans abroad. In thickly spread, confectionary oil, Hodgkinson conjures the neoclassical stucco as a disguise for the pure rotting pleasure of a sugar crisis. From one painting to the next, the tell and retell of the seriality becomes a viral bipolarity, jamming the steering wheel hard between left and right, austere and ironic, concrete and abstract, correct and incorrect, passive and aggressive, vertical and horizontal, certain and uncertain. An echo of the historical monochrome shimmers seductively in the background of this repetition compulsion, as if any of this inner turmoil could ever be resolved. But when the architectural formalism counters the psychological formalism with honest-to-goodness physical reality, the spiralling shuts down, releasing into blank stone monoliths of soothing brushstrokes.

This is Hodgkinson's first solo show with the gallery - the "putting on the braces" moment.

John Hodgkinson was born in Lincoln, England in 1989. He lives and works in London, England. Ramiken is open Tuesday - Saturday, 12-6pm. For more information please call +1 (917) 434-4245 or email Emily Berger at emily@ramiken.biz.