

We are proud to present A Perfume Against the Sulphurous Stinke of the Snuffe, of the Light for Smoak, the third solo show in our gallery by British artist David Thorpe, his second in our Karlsruhe showroom.

David Thorpe's visual language outlines antagonisms, expressed formally in the juxtaposition and interpenetration of geometrical and ornamental structures. Using media such as drawing, sculpture, installation and verse, the artist generates spatial situations - sometimes fictive ones - often accentuating the exhibition space as a component of his work with specific architectural elements. In our present show, floor and wall surfaces in particular play a fundamental role, not only as partitioning objects. Several swinging doors or a paravent-like partition screen, made of wood and multicolored, painted glass in geometrical segments sheath the individual gallery rooms, causing awareness of the process of entering or passing through a spatial situation. As the sequence of rooms is segmented, the viewer's perception is too, but Thorpe conjoins the individual units with recurrent stylistic imagery.

The floor piece in the front room, The Plague, consists of a series of handmade ceramic tiles, laid out in a rectangular shape and bordered by a wooden frame. The white décor of the dark tiles is a floral image recalling the tradition of oriental faience, it is serially repeated, but varied in detail due to its manually implemented print. The ornament as it is used by Thorpe as subject matter, exists beyond its aesthetic function as a reference to a structure based on biological growth, even as a metaphor for a form derived from a natural process of development, theoretically never-ending. The artist's relation to the Arts and Crafts Movement is expressed stylistically as well as symbolically in his conscious handling of the material he utilizes in his work.

The second showroom, bordered on both sides by a restrictive passage cased in white glass, forms a self-contained, shuttered-off interior. In the center of each of the room's two opposing walls one large panel with a poem is hung, flanked to the left and right by a row of horizontal fluorescent tubes, giving the two walls the symmetrical appearance of mirrored images. The poems - written by Thorpe and painted in oil - are related to pamphlets formulated for example in the 17th century by the preacher and 'seeker' John Saltmarsh. Thorpe's lyrical poems also form an alliance with the actual space: Paired with the searingly bright and heat-radiating light of the lamps, the poems are a verbal explication of the immaterial, while also being extinguished in the hard shine of the light in this dualism of aggression and beauty.

Three watercolor drawings from David Thorpe's series Shadows are presented in our back room. As in the piece The Plague, where the image structure conjoins in the continuation of individual tiles, in

these watercolors there is a geometrically applied pattern along which the organic motif - the curly leaves of various plants – develops as a floral, ornamental design. The path of this continual movement circulates between a free, endless branching, and a containment thereof through a defined surface area, in which the seemingly natural shape of the floral design is subjected to a constructed, artificial order which overshadows it.

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