

In the new year Liam Gillick will deliver the 2013 Bampton Lectures at Columbia University. It is the latest in a series that began in 1948 and has included astronomer Fred Hoyle, science historian Jacob Bronowski and Philosopher Paul Ricoeur.

For his first exhibition at Galleria Alfonso Artiaco, Gillick will present the outline of each of his four lectures – that cover the main tenets of his work over the last twenty years. These simple descriptions will be combined with a series of abstract structures. The text works and formal works have no direct connection – however neither would be possible without the other. Gillick has declared that he has written a number of texts in the past few years that addressed various structural aspects of art: abstraction, modes of work, labour and life, collaboration, and the state of contemporary art. The artist continues saying that one of the problems of this approach is that there ends up being too much focus on recuperation and reiteration, as these are two aspects of art that can be independently verified: “ I want to address the underlying structures of the main projects I have worked on over the past twenty years. This means it will be less a series of lectures on art and more a series of lectures about what actually took and takes place in order to lead to the possibility of art. Or more accurately, the way art still exists as a problem and an enduring human activity that is essentially connected to refusal and reinvention rather than classification and judgment. I will attempt to do this by talking about the kinds of social and political structures that have been at the heart of the work”. (Liam Gillick, interview with Tom Eccles, in Art Review, issue 63, November 2012)

Liam Gillick (1964, Aylesbury, England, UK; lives and works in New York and London) is an artist whose work deals with art as well as architecture, design, music and writing. There is a deep rupture in his work which he himself admits he cannot resolve. On one hand there is the “desire to keep alive the potential of an abstraction that can function outside the standard systems of validation but remain specific rather than make universalist claims”. On the other, he wants to “engage with the context in ways that have a function and use-value. These two aspects of the work have always existed and have very little to do with participation or institutional critique”, themes which are as much crucial to his work. (ibidem)

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