

Press Release

Exhibition: Dirty Linen
Paintings and works on paper by Dillwyn Smith
Opening: Saturday 18th October 2014, 5-8 pm
Exhibition dates: 15th October to 20th December 2014
Curated by Gill Hedley

Patrick Heide Contemporary Art is delighted to announce “Dirty Linen”, the first solo exhibition of British artist Dillwyn Smith at the gallery.

Spanning almost a decade of experimentation with textiles, colours and homeopathic essences, “Dirty Linen” attempts to capture the metaphysical qualities of the creative process and fuse them with the traditional techniques of painting and drawing.

While living through a prolonged period of his mother’s Alzheimer’s disease, Smith experienced the replacement of common conversation by silent dialogue and began to question some fundamental aspects of art and how it is transmitted and perceived. Always seeking to challenge his creative process, Smith set out to research if, besides an intellectual, emotional and sensual dialogue between an artwork and the viewer, there is an additional and more essential exchange of energies that better defines that dialogue.

“Dirty Linen” is an inquiry into this exchange of energies, it is about energy produced, emanated and received during and after the creative process.

In his ‘Potency Paintings’ Smith experimented with essences of pure colour pigments. These ‘potenised pigments’, made for him by Nelsons Homeopathic Company, were sprayed and saturated into fabric or canvas, which were often stitched together with other textiles or painted surfaces and then stretched over wooden frames.

The “Placebo Paintings” display Smith’s characteristic sensitivity to materiality combined with a new interest in pure colour and its communicative and spiritual capabilities. At a recent residency in Oman, Smith discovered the warm and luminous tones of the local Dishdasha cloth, as well as the traditional craft of sewing, weaving and dyeing.

Invited to make a one person show at the Rothko center in Latvia in 2013, these materials and techniques inspired him to a series of purely stitched fabric works influenced by the colour and traditionally carved wooden dwellings in Daugavpils, the city where Rothko was born and spent 10 years of his childhood, not surprisingly an artist with whom Smith shares common ground.

Smith’s drawings have the most direct communication with the effects of energy. Executed using the technique of Kirlian photography, the paper, with the aid of an electro plate, is exposed to a high voltage source. The compositions that emerge after processing are defined by the corona around an object or a motion; in Smith’s case the fingers and their sliding movement across the paper.

Gill Hedley is an independent curator, writer and consultant. Previously an exhibitions organiser at the British Council and, from 1993-2006, Director of the Contemporary Art Society, she is currently working with individual artists, the Freud Museum, the Wellcome Trust and the Foundling on a range of projects.