

Graeme Todd

Blank Frank

15 April – 29 May 2010

Private View:

Wednesday 14 April, 6–8 pm

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 6pm

*Blank Frank has a memory that's as cold as an iceberg,
The only time he speaks is in incomprehensible proverbs*

Mummery + Schnelle is pleased to announce an exhibition of the work of Graeme Todd.

Graeme Todd listens to a lot of experimental music from the 1970s. The title chosen for his exhibition, *Blank Frank*, makes reference to a track on Brian Eno's 1973 album *Here Come the Warm Jets* that was a comment on the impenetrable nature of collaborator Robert Fripp and prefigures the subsequent, and equally impenetrable, 'oblique strategies' of the pair's later icy cold ambient works. The painted products of Todd's own peculiar strategies are unverifiable visual fantasies that parallel the alchemical aural (con)fusion of the drones, tape loops and psychedelic synthesizers of German Kosmische Musik - an anti-gravitational motorik along the autobahns of a many layered collective memoryscape.

Todd's works are painted palimpsests, the scoured surfaces of which, slashed, spattered and stained, are covered with bravura, non-hierarchical patterning that enables us to read back through the many different strata that the artist creates with pen, ink, paint and varnish on plywood and mdf supports. The stains of scattered poppy seeds litter his logbook of half forgotten, deep frozen, opium tinged dreams. Todd's surfaces communicate an idea of space rather than being a literal representation of it. His spatial schemes subvert conventional relationships of scale by simultaneously employing the microscopic and the cosmic, combining substrata and extensions of infinite space. Todd's marks coalesce and dissolve like the disincarnate actions of free-floating figures or the random bounces of screen-saver entropy. Quoting Leo Steinberg's comment about Jackson Pollock's paintings, Todd says, while pointing at his painting *Blank Frank*, "you could fly a space ship through this". He raids Lucio Fontana's "art for the Space Age" for its patterns of vertical slashes and the compositional ambiguity provided by the sculpted frames of the *teatrini* series (1964-66), where both illustrative and abstract elements co-exist.

Graeme Todd lives and works in Dunbar, which is not very far from the small town of Duns where the philosopher John 'Duns' Scotus was born, probably in 1266. Scotus argued that there must be some sensory context for any act of intellectual cognition. In order for the intellect to make use of sensory information it must first take the raw material provided by the senses in the form of material images and make them into suitable objects for understanding. These material images Scotus called "phantasms". There are phantasms in Graeme Todd's paintings - drawings of objects such as trees, rocks or buildings - that help anchor his otherwise disparate visual cacophonies and, perhaps, suggest ways in which knowledge of them might be reached. *Phantasm* was also the name of a short lived LA thrash metal band, who's distorted guitar sound had a precursor in the experimental music of 70s groups such as Neu! and King Crimson, something that loops us nicely back to where we started.

Graeme Todd was born in Glasgow in 1962. Images and full biographical and bibliographical information about him can be found on www.mummeryschnelle.com.

For all further inquiries please contact Andrew Mummery at andrew@mummeryschnelle.com or Wolfram Schnelle at wolfram@mummeryschnelle.com

The next exhibition at Mummery + Schnelle: *Merlin James: Frame Paintings*. 9 June – 31 July.