

What If It's All True? What Then?

Part 1: Simon Callery, Angela de la Cruz, Louise Hopkins, Peter Joseph, Ingo Meller, Avis Newman, Rebecca Salter.

6 April – 14 May 2011

Opening hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm and by appointment.

What If It's All True? What Then? is the second of two exhibitions curated by Andrew Mummery for Mummery + Schnelle, which take a critical look at aspects of painting today. The first, *The Beholder's Share**, asked how it might be possible to situate in the space of the present, references to the historicity of painting. Focusing primarily on representational works, this exhibition featured artists who are re-examining the traditional genres of painting, such as portraiture and landscape, and the concept of the "studio painting".

What If It's All True? What Then? takes as its starting point the continued relevance of abstraction to many painters working today. Indeed, there are so many varieties of abstract painting now that the category has almost ceased to have a coherent meaning. Instead, therefore, of trying to represent the full gamut of what passes as abstraction today *What If It's All True? What Then?* focuses on fourteen painters whose work is a continued re-engagement with Modernism, its tropes and heritage. Surface, support and mark as gesture and sign are concerns that recur in different ways throughout the exhibition. The exhibition suggests that these concerns can represent a critical re-engagement with Modernist tropes that analyses the entanglements of bodily experience, memory and imagination, both in the making the work and in the subject's reception of it. It proposes, therefore, a phenomenological interpretation as a valid means of addressing abstract painting beyond Modernism.

What If It's All True? What Then? is also the title of a book which illustrates the works in the exhibition and contains essays by Anna Moszynska, Chris Townsend and Stuart Elliot. Anna Moszynska discusses the work of the artists in the exhibition in the context of developments in abstraction since the 1980s. Chris Townsend examines the ways in which "meaning" can be attached to mark and gesture and Stuart Elliot looks at how discussion of the current situation of abstract painting might be orientated to the question of its potential in the present. The book will be available at the beginning of May.

The title of the book and exhibition is derived from the title of an early, now destroyed text painting by John Baldessari. Such a question could seem to speak to the notion of painting as being plagued by problems/criticisms and so as something embattled. Or, it could also suggest the idea of an ethical dilemma in the face of relativising cultural, historical and social forces: what if, in some important way, all our different histories and explanatory frameworks have persuasive claims on our allegiances or desires? What then?

For further information, please contact Andrew Mummery at: andrew@mummerschnelle.com.

* 13 October – 4 December 2010. The exhibition featured the work of Philip Akkerman, Robert Bordo, Nogah Engler, Louise Hopkins, Merlin James, Tom LaDuke, Carol Rhodes, Julie Roberts, David Schutter and Christopher Stevens.