

## Artist Statement-Andrew Rucklidge

I'd like to say I came up with the idea for this show on a hunting trip. I feel like I'm always on the hunt, often for food, but sometimes for anything of currency from the deep past. This time it was the *Tuchlein* paintings primarily of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century Netherlands, a fussy technique involving layered applications of pure pigment and the rendered glue of animal bones. Raw, faded, sunken, matte, crumbling and yet they smelled of neglect, castles and power.

Using this technique got me thinking about the hunt and all its metaphoric implications: sighting, baiting, tracks, traces, escape, ammunition, stalking, classic and digital camouflage, waiting, and ideally the feast. This pretty much sums up an artists daily checklist, a famished borderline detective. I envisioned a show where repeated forms and surfaces were shifting and hunting each other across the gallery. The paintings would refer and relate to each other in a predatory stalking manner; the variants of basic forms reasserting themselves within new backgrounds and contexts (a pictorial natural selection). The initial referent forms geometric and acting as seeds in the picture plane and then amplified using compositional devices. The crystalline character of the seeding geometric forms then relates to the instinct for the 'Thing itself', most powerful in primitive man:

*'The Geometric line is distinguished from the natural object precisely by the fact that it does not stand in any natural context...taken out of the ceaseless flux of the forces of nature they have become visible on their own'* (Lipps, *Aesthetik*, 249)

That geometric line should slice just like the bolt of an arrow out of the blue.

This hunt dovetails nicely into the Modernist search for the 'Sunken Treasure' and with the Marxian concern with the outmoded and the nonsynchronous:

*'The marvelous is not the same in every period: it partakes in some obscure way of a sort of general revelation only the fragments of which come down to us: they are the romantic ruins, the modern mannequin.'* Breton, *Manifesto*

This brings to mind the linguistic concept of the shifter. The personal pronouns 'You' and 'I' shift in meaning based on the person uttering the word. It's as if this programmatic conversational shift of authorship has an inherently predatory nature, the ultimate linguistic camouflage for which I am attempting to find a visual equivalent, much like pointing and uttering 'this' or 'that'.

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