

CHROMOPHILIA**27 JUNE – 26 JULY 2008****WED – SAT 12.30-5 PM****CURATED BY PERNILLE HOLM-MERCER****PRIVATE VIEW THURSDAY****26 JUNE 6.30-8.30 PM**

Alice Anderson

Matt Franks

Kirsten Glass

Jane Harris

Pernille Holm-Mercer

Daisuku Kawada

Dolly Thompsett

Image still: *THE IDIOT OF EVENVILLE*, 2005 Alice Anderson

BEARSPACE is delighted to present 'Chromophilia', a group exhibition curated by Pernille Holm-Mercer. The show includes a group of artists –both newly emerging and more established –who investigate, and celebrate the complex art historical readings of synthetic, mass-produced colour and its various gaudy material manifestations.

'Colour is dangerous. It is a drug, a loss of consciousness, a kind of blindness – at least for the moment (Batchelor, *Chromophobia*)'. Taking their cue from Batchelor, artists Alice Anderson, Matt Franks, Kirsten Glass, Jane Harris, Pernille Holm-Mercer, Daisuku Kawada, and Dolly Thompsett engage with the layered meanings of vivid synthetic colour and its cultural connotations of kitsch, flamboyance, madness and Otherness.

Previous generations of artists have explored this area of cultural significance. In various ways they have used 'cheap' colour to play out political agendas on issues of gender, class, race, sexuality and ethnic marginality. For example, Yinka Shonibare employs bright and vibrantly coloured fabrics in a calculating way, that is, as a strategic, subversive 'weapon' used for the purpose of challenging and disrupting the social order – and the norms of purity and *whiteness*.

'Chromophilia' demonstrates that a shift has taken place in the engagement with and deployment of modern vividly coloured materials. Particular to the artists in 'Chromophilia' – and to the contemporary moment – is a desire to seduce viewers towards a conceptual field, rather than, as previously, an inclination to attract attention by foregrounding a critical or political position. For, artists such as Anderson, Franks, Glass, Holm-Mercer, Kawada, Harris and Thompsett appear to be less preoccupied than their immediate predecessors by the need to disrupt, assert, and expose, although that desire, less forcefully and didactically stated, is still present in their work. Cultural codes and critical positions are hinted at, played with, but they are more indefinable, slippery, and elusive. In keeping with this attitude, these artists do not use vivid colour as a strategic 'weapon'; rather colour is, in the spirit of full-blown chromophilia, celebrated and embraced as magical, discordant, uncontrollable –antidisciplinary.

Employing the full range of effects across their various practices –from the glossy and the glittery to the

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pearlescent, the day-glo, and the luminous –the artists in this exhibition transport the viewer to a dream-like world of sensuous experience, revealing glimpses of narcotic states, delirium and madness in the process.