

Neil Rumming

The work you are showing in Conversation#2 seems to have taken a slightly different direction to your previous work. Can you tell us a little about the work you are showing?

The j-cloth paintings are an on-going series of works that run parallel to my other studio work and are an attempt to expand and question investigations I had previously undertaken in the studio.

In earlier work I was block printing sections of Hessian and jute to canvas to create a mediated interpretation of the canvas surface. I was looking for an alternative ground for my paintings that had the same effect of alluding to the structure of traditional cotton duck canvas.

What drew me to the j-cloths was the printed grid pattern on each cloth which reminded me of the warp and weft of canvas. I also liked the idea of the j-cloth as a cheap mass produced, practical cleaning product being subverted into something that could be perceived as desirable or ornamental.

I found it compelling that through the process of making these painting, the j-cloth fulfils its potential and design by mopping up the spill, poured liquids on the studio floor, hardening as if it were in amber and rendering itself obsolete.

When I first saw these works in your studio I thought there was an interesting relationship between the j-cloth as your canvas but also functioning as your painting. Was this an idea you had been thinking about when you made these works?

No, there was no clear idea, only a desire to see what would happen. The original intention was the idea of testing the physical properties of the j-cloth as I thought it had qualities similar to fibreglass matting and using it in tandem with polyurethane and vinyl acetate I could create surfaces that would have an immediacy and transparency that would expose the structure of the painted object and the stretcher.

I have always been intrigued by the concept of testing the parameters of painting, the mediums that are associated with painting and how these can be transgressed or transformed.

The domesticity associated to such a mundane material like the j-cloth seems to fit seamlessly into the domesticity of the space. How do you anticipate the artwork to be read in such an immersive environment?

I'm not sure. There was and still is a reticence on my behalf to show these works but when I saw the space and we discussed the project, it seemed the right context to test these paintings. I was excited by the idea of returning the transformed j-cloth back to a space where it is supposed to exist and seeing if the display of the work would reveal new values or would they still remain j-cloths stretched onto a frame?

Maybe this feeds into the display of the work. We have discussed the idea of displaying the paintings on the ceiling, is this a device that separates the artworks from the cacophony of domesticity on the floor and walls?

The choice of displaying the work on the ceiling for me is a clear one. To question and re-evaluate the gallery model, something which Millington|Marriott are already attempting to confront by choosing a domestic space as the setting for their shows. Second, I think it brings attention to the physical objectness of the paintings whilst also drawing attention to other possibly overlooked architectural details and wall fittings within the property. What I find interesting is that there is a sense of discomfort in craning your neck to see the work on the ceiling and the thought of people bumping into each other or surrounding furniture is both hilarious and socially awkward. Also, by placing them on the ceiling you could easily pass them by and this disrupts the idea that the work is just decorative and there to be enjoyed.

My final question is about how you want your paintings to interact with Paul's vinyl work. What are you aiming to achieve with this interaction?

When discussing the show with Paul I was certain that the interaction should be committed, that both artists work, must physically meet and interact. I want the canvases to act as conduits or clearly delineated spaces for Paul's hard edge vinyl lines to pass over, under, mark or to bypass and how this visual conversation can trigger new readings or thoughts that could have been overlooked. Creating new threads of information that can be examined later in the studio.