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Blue Movie (one more time ... this time with feeling)

Gareth James

Elizabeth Dee Gallery is pleased to present *Blue Movie (one more time. . . this time with feeling)* by Gareth James. Consisting of new origami-based sculptures, and engaging his longstanding interest in musical pieces by Aaron Copland (Appalachian Spring) and Gavin Bryars (Jesus Blood) in new audio and video works, *Blue Movie* explicitly develops James's approach to questions of topology, abstraction, formalism and capitalism (most recently observed in his last exhibition at American Fine Arts, Co., GET REAL ESTATE).

James's work continues to prioritize topological over purely visual shifts in representation, insisting that the necessity for developing our abstract formal capacities for understanding those global operations that circumscribe our lives (while exceeding our capacity to "figure" them) is increasingly urgent. Grappling with the questions of color since wRECONSTRUCTION, his collaboration with Storm van Helsing and Colin de Land at American Fine Arts in 2001, James has opted for what was once the most disreputable of colors, associated with inappropriate language and pornographic movies, but which has now become the great non-color, non-image, and non-place of contemporary capitalism, blue-screen blue.

"A colour which is beneficial to the eye cannot be made up of component parts of which one is the most disturbing, most hideous, and most meaningless that can be thought of. [⋮] Clearly there is a secret somewhere in the spectrum, an element foreign to us, which, next to yellow, plays its part in creating green. Students of physics should make it a duty to find out. [⋮] Daily they flood the world with new rays, all of them from the invisible spectrum. For the problem of our actual light they have found a stock solution. The third primary colour, the missing one, the one we know only by its result, not by its appearance, is-so they say-blue. Take a word at random, fit it into a problem and the problem is solved. So that no-one can see through the trick, they choose a disreputable and generally discredited word; naturally enough men hesitate before they submit such a word to microscopic examination. [⋮] Men are cowards. When a decision should be taken they would rather bargain a dozen times over it; maybe they can lie it away.'

Permit me to write that the situation currently organizing the practice of art in New York today resembles nothing so much as the mental acrobatics Elias Canetti's mad and deluded "Professor" Peter Kein performs in vaulting over the blue skirt of his tormentor. Whilst in 1946 Mr. Kein's feverish intellect fixates upon the color blue-the blue of a skirt which stands for a woman, once his maid, now the wife who wears it who stands in turn for his own radically unsustainable program of miserly and proprietorial intellectual acquisition-there has been generated in New York today an exponential proliferation of deferral and delegation of the fucking problem of culture where each commits tenaciously to his or her own fetishistic solution to a problem so clouded in substitution that even physicists rub their heads at the marvelous slight of hand. And yet, nonetheless, acquisition continues."

Storm van Helsing, August 2001 (published in Texte zur Kunst issue #44, December 2001). Quote from Elias Canetti, Auto-da-fé, p. 389.

A British artist and writer based in New York, Gareth James has exhibited widely throughout the United States and

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Europe. Recent exhibitions include *Make It Now* at Sculpture Center, *Big Nothing* at ICA Philadelphia and *Establishing Shot* at Artists Space. His work will be included in the forthcoming publication *Vitamin D* published by Phaidon.