

Steven Cox

Language Barrier

29 October - 10 December 2016

Annarumma Gallery is pleased to present Steven Cox, *Language Barrier*, the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery, from 29 October - 10 December 2016.

Steven Cox's newest series of horizontal stripe paintings examine the visual conflict that arises through the fusing of disparate painterly languages. The works pay testament to the history of painting as an intensifying visual language. Throughout *Language Barrier*, the materiality of the canvas is scrutinized as a physical barrier that demands disrupting and interrogating. Cox challenges the traditional substrates of painting by exploring the conflicting action of applying paint to both sides of the canvas.



Barrier III
Oil and Spraypaint on Canvas,
100cm x 80cm (Artist Frame)
2016

Language Barrier expands on the artist's recurring use of the horizontal stripe motif, a signature compositional and structural device that Cox has explored for several years. This linear systematic arrangement provides a framework to the artist's investigation of the figure-ground relationship that concerns the study of space within two-dimensional painting. For the first time, Steven Cox presents a series of paintings on raw unprimed canvas, incorporating the application of oil and spray paint to both sides of the painting. Areas of diluted colour applied to the reverse of the painting faintly stain the canvas to form a subtle dialogue with the heavily applied layers of paint on the surface. Through abrupt and stark transitions of colour, structure and texture, an impression of ambiguous depth creates a powerful push-pull effect, generating an illusion of movement and space.

The horizontal stripe paintings contain traces of their own construction; between neighbouring stripes of saturated colour, Cox provides the viewer with visual clues that relate to the environment of the works conception. Wall and floor rubbings taken from the artist's studio is incorporated into the works composition, the viewer can identify detritus that maps the terrain of the artist's studio. The hybridization of painterly techniques extends further, for the painted stripes reflect Cox's intentions of producing a sensation of the sublime most commonly found in the least expected and grittiest of exterior places. By deconstructing the illegal act of fly posting and the connected removal of advertisement posters, Cox reenacts this repetitive action through an intensive process of application-and-removal. By painting directly onto large plastic sheets, Cox transfers layers of paint to the canvas surface in a rough and imperfect monoprinting like manner. By methodically layering oil and spray paint, the stripes gradually evolve producing subtle lines and crevices reminiscent of ripped posters, flaking paint and the rocky texture of harling walls.

Language Barrier is a majestic revisioning of horizontal lyricism that examines the artist's thorough investigation into materiality and temporality; the pluralities of surfaces succeed in generating a unique perceptual experience that emits a familiar sense of time and place.

Steven Cox (b.1986) lives and works in Edinburgh, Scotland. He has recently been awarded the 2016/2017 Lepsien Art Foundation Residency Grant in Düsseldorf, Germany. Recent exhibitions include: *Post No Bills*, Galleri Benoni, *Face To Face*, (Collection of Ernesto Esposito) Palazzo Fruscione, *Whatspace*, Halsey McKay Gallery, *A Moveable Feast*, Galerie Jerome Pauchant, *Somewhere Along The Line*, Ana Cristea Gallery.