

TUCCI RUSSO STUDIO PER L'ARTE CONTEMPORANEA

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Mercoledì > Domenica: 10.30-13 / 15-19

ROBIN RHODE

Primitives

Opening Sunday 9th October 2016

11:00 – 16:00

Until 26th February 2017

Through art history the notion of what constitutes the *primitive* has had an underlying effect on various aspects of cultural production. We define the *primitive* as characteristically depicting an early state with regards to civilization, or even an early stage of evolutionary development. The term *primitive* also pertains to geological, linguistic, as well as theological associations. The definition also continues to pinpoint societies characterized by low-income levels and non-industrial social systems. It is within the framework of attempting to define the term *Primitives* that Robin Rhode has developed his latest exhibition, his fourth solo presentation at the gallery.

Applying primitive geometric shapes as basic formal templates in certain modes of production and as points of inspiration for others, Rhode's new body of work attempts to re-contextualize geometry as a narrative form that is loaded with physiological, political, and social meaning. Playing off the term *primitive* within the context of art history where simplicity and naivety of process rather than the subtlety of auto-didacticism becomes the over-riding de facto, Rhode has produced a deeply arresting body of work in situ in Johannesburg, South Africa. Inspired by definitions of color in terms of race and classification within the socio-political history of South Africa, in this latest body of work Rhode investigates the term 'color' through a literal examination of its formal and theoretical constructs. Rhode attempts to re-envision a new perceptual understanding on the definition of color theory by examining the notion of chromatics through the interaction between the body and the color field as geometric primitive. Rhode's color-field exists as basic wall painted reliefs that are created within anonymous urban settings that enables a deconstructive physiology of how we define and co-exist within the fields of color. Within this new body of work Rhode has embraced the aesthetic nature of geometric shapes that begin to function as an alternative discourse for both physical drawing and performance.

In the new work titled *RGBG*, an acronym for Red Green Blue Green, which is a fundamental structure of the Pen-Tile matrix family that describes a geometric layout of a proto-typical sub-pixel arrangement found in electronic devices, Rhode depicts this technological form as a *primitive*, two-dimensional plane, created as a wall painting. The term *RGBG* is also referred to as the Bayer color Filter Mosaic, named after its inventor Bryce Bayer, where each two-by-two sub-mosaic in the given grid contains 2 green, 1 blue and 1 red filter, each covering one pixel sensor. Rhode views the wall drawing grid or matrix as a type of floating filing system for color in which an anonymous male figure is able to engage with as a functioning three-dimensional entity. The figure in question is an anonymous man, omnipresent in this latest body of work, dressed entirely in black to represent a mnemonic device in defining the physical freeze-framed actions, in this case, a man mopping the tiled *RGBG* floor. The artist re-imagines technological systems as an already *primitive* echo of the past while embracing rudimentary materials of art production in order to communicate the transient nature of experience within the coded landscape of the 21st century.

Robin Rhode's exhibition *Primitives* coincides with the launch of his new catalogue titled *Tension* published jointly by Hatje Cantz and Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea. The monograph includes an essay by Michele Robecchi as well as an interview by Andrea Bellini and spans ten years of artistic collaboration with Tucci Russo gallery.