

Painting. Painting as a concept, as a subject, as an object, as a practice. Arryn Snowball works within all of these areas, investigating theoretical and physical manifestations of the cornerstone of western art. When pondering painting, one often considers the medium in terms of historical context and precedent. Yet why do painters paint what they paint? Why did Claude Lorraine paint bizarre and unconventional landscapes? Why did Leonardo da Vinci paint the Mona Lisa? These questions are rarely asked, and similarly Snowball's friends and colleagues often ask him what he is painting rather than why he paints his chosen subjects.

In previous bodies of work Snowball has slowly, meticulously worked the surface of his canvases, combining layers and colours of wet paint to produce near flawless surfaces. Snowball works with the everyday, with subjects that are not particularly remarkable - he has painted steam, clouds and television static. We know his subjects and immediately recognise them, yet they are fleeting, ever changing and impermanent – in many ways the direct opposite of the concept of art as historical record/relic/mirror to society.

In his sheet paintings Snowball has again visited a familiar subject. We can all cognitively picture a sheet on a clothesline and this simple object has fed Snowball's intrigue with shifting, fleeting phenomena. He could turn his attention to something that is in itself a remarkably beautiful force of nature (think the auroras, or the fall of an avalanche) but this would miss the point of what Snowball is doing. Reflecting upon 20th century abstraction, Snowball pays homage to his artistic forebears. He retraces notions of the square-within-the-square but discovers a freedom of line, form and expression.

Paint is no longer mixed on the surface. Like an ad from his childhood, Snowball works layer upon layer upon layer. From a jet black ground Snowball builds veils of moments past. These veils aren't grey per se, rather they are white fighting against their black anchor. In their force of numbers the layers combine to reach their idealised clarity of tone. Snowball's sheets also produce an almost imperceptible three dimensionality through his use of the zip technique.

Derived from photographs, snowball separates split-seconds, then overlays them to suggest not only the passage of time but also the unavoidably finite journey of life. In doing so he indeed follows the path of painters who have come before him. By producing images that are at once stark yet gentle, cold yet familiar and domestic, Snowball leaves us with an abstract form of a tangible object, which is itself a tangible representation of the concept of time. In essence these are a form of history painting. Snowball fluctuates between concept, subject, object and practice. And all with a simple bedsheet.

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Recent Paintings

Opening Friday 26 October 6-8 pm
Exhibition 24 October - 17 November 2007
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Right, Untitled VI, 2007, oil on linen, 182 x 182cm
Far Right, Untitled IV, 2007, oil on linen, 182 x 182cm
Cover, Untitled III, 2007, oil on linen, 182 x 182cm

Overleaf left, Untitled V, 2007, oil on linen, 182 x 182cm
Overleaf middle, Untitled II, 2007, oil on linen, 182 x 182cm
Overleaf right, Untitled I, 2007, oil on linen, 182 x 182cm

