

Press Release

Nick Renshaw

'Other Origins'

23rd February to 30th March 2013

Opening: Saturday 23 February, 2013 16.00

Nick Renshaw (1967, York) has worked as an artist in Amsterdam for two decades now and he has broadened his experience considerably in international settings during the past few years. He has spent many months in China for instance, working in what is clearly in many ways a very different culture to The Netherlands. There, he has not only come to understand new perspectives on ceramic work but also much more about how the Chinese people he has met both view the world and understand contemporary art. These encounters influence both directly and indirectly his current work which tends to have very varied textured surfaces. These uneven, haptic peculiarities and imperfections refute the mass produced and often anonymous object. For this current exhibition Renshaw has developed sculptures which are a fusion of modelled and mould formed approaches. Although figurative, these sculptures are, he says, "very stylised", cut away sections and abstract shapes being incorporated into the works after they have emerged from the mould for instance. This process of editing the superfluous and incidental to convey an idea which seems immediately recognisable and easily shared is reminiscent of one element of the tri-partite definition of signification devised by semiotician C.S. Peirce. Defined as 'symbolic' (written language which has no visual resemblance to the word described), 'iconic' (some resemblance is visible, as in the simplified drawing of a car on a no-through-route street sign), and 'indexical', (the visual image contains a trace of the object, person or materials depicted), Renshaw's mode of working is resolutely iconic. His sturdy mannequins suggest human form but frequently have other-worldly attributes; they are both familiar and yet elude signification. Often mysterious and beguiling he has also developed smaller pieces using the Chinese Blanc de Chine which have tender features such as clearly discernible fingers and toes.

Renshaw's series of sculptures for this current exhibition are around 70cm high and covered in either "coloured, machine-like glazes" or, in complete contrast "...extreme white on terracotta crackle glaze". His residencies in China have allowed him to gain insights into his familiar working methods. He says "You have these moments - get new inspiration - it's a matter of clarifying previous ideas". Being abroad helps him to again and again understand the need to "work with tensions of "smooth/not smooth, finished/unfinished, old and new", encouraging the sort of idiosyncrasies which conversely could so easily be wiped away. The title of this show refers at once to his previous incarnations of humanoids, aliens and beings from other worlds as well as his understanding and wish to create a physical interpretation of the different approaches to life and art he encounters.

Nick Renshaw is currently also completing a PhD through the University of Sunderland, focusing on the subject of international ceramic art residencies. With reference particularly to the EKWC in The Netherlands in comparison to those in other parts of the world such as North America, and China.

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