

News Release from Milton Keynes Gallery

10 June – 28 July

Phillip Allen

Admission Free

Preview: 9 June | 17.30-20.00 | All press and media welcome



Phillip Allen,
Contacts and Beliefs, 2005. Courtesy Kerlin Gallery,
Dublin



Phillip Allen,
Nollet, 2005. Courtesy The Approach, London

The first major solo exhibition in the UK by British artist Phillip Allen will take place at Milton Keynes Gallery (MK G) this June. Allen is well-known for his textured paintings, where the central motif is surrounded by an impastoed 'frame', as multiple layers of paint are amassed and coated over each other.

Phillip Allen's work demonstrates not only an interest in image-making, but also with the substance and nature of paint itself. Images are developed from the artist's continuous practice of making numerous felt-tip sketches and drawings on A4 paper, which chart the inception of his abstract forms and arrangements. These drawings become the basis for his paintings.

Formally, Phillip Allen's paintings are contradictory. Gobbets of paint bracket the interior of the image, characterized by thin washes of colour. The relief-like peripheral blobs protrude aggressively into the viewer's space, contrasting with the pictorial

elements of the central areas. Allen's work projects an uncompromising loyalty to the formal, material tenets of modernism in which the painterly process is at stake. The titles tell us that each work is clearly *of* something, that an entity is being represented, and a private game is being played in which the rules of modernism are both acknowledged and irreverently dismissed.

In *Contacts and Beliefs*, 2005 two structures are punctured by multiple blocks of bright-coloured tablet like forms. The colour in *Nollet*, 2005 is much more subdued, where pale blue geometric shapes surround a series of white ghost-like forms that appear from a black void. Additionally, Allen makes a painting for each year with his age standing boldly at the painting's heart.

The source material for Allen's imagery is wide and varied: cartoons, architectures, myth and design. Equally titles are taken from various sources and playfully appropriated. The Beezerspline series is named for the *Bezierspline*, a mathematical tool for producing curves in 3D designed by Pierre Bézier in the 1970s. The title becomes more playful and familiar by referencing the 1950s comic *Beezer*. Katterfelto ('Katterfelto', 2005) was an itinerant performer of the 1700s who presented demonstrations of early microscopy and electricity as pseudo-magical phenomena. Allen's referencing of such varied sources is a reflection of his working approach in general.

Phillips Allen (b. 1967 London) lives and works in London. Solo shows include Kerlin Gallery, Dublin (2005), The Approach Gallery, London (2004, 2002), PS1, New York (2003). Group shows include the British Art Show 5, 'Stay Positive' at Marella Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2004), 'Post Flat - New Art from London', Lock's Gallery, Philadelphia (2003), 'Another Shitty Day in Paradise', Bart Wells Institute, London (2002), 'The Galleries Show', The Royal Academy, London (2002).

A full colour catalogue with an essay by Caoimhin MacGiolla Leith will accompany this Milton Keynes Gallery exhibition.

Press Information | For further information, images or interview requests, please contact Giselle Richardson. Tel: 01908 558 302, or email: g.richardson@mk-g.org.

Ends | Date Issued: 5 Apr 05