

PRESS RELEASE

ROB SHERWOOD

Synthetic Symphonies: 'Where I End And You Begin'

MARCH 18 – APRIL 22, 2010

OPENING THURSDAY MARCH 18, 19.00 21.00

FEDERICA SCHIAVO GALLERY
PIAZZA MONTEVECCHIO 16 ROMA

Federica Schiavo is proud to present British artist Rob Sherwood's second exhibition in the gallery. The show will consist of nine new paintings and a series of print works which continue the artist's engagement with the effect of light, the influence of digital media and the balance between nature and artifice.

In the spatial sense, the grid states the autonomy of the realm of art. Flattened, geometricized, ordered, it is antinatural, antimimetic, antireal. It is what art looks like when it turns its back to nature. (Rosalind Krauss)

Whereas digital art has tended to obsess with the expanded facility of networked cultures, Sherwood's work reflects on digital facility itself. This, accordingly, is art about finding a depth of perception, literally and metaphorically, in a flat-screened world. Rather than being content with seeing society through its effulgence of pop images and simulacra, Sherwood dissects digital perception, using as a common denominator a factor as central to the real as to virtual worlds: light. He marvels at the age of light and the way it changes with time, today, he says, "The contrast and brightness settings on the T.V. and computer screen mean a lot to me. Mainly for their odd namesake. As far as I can tell, it's the contrast of light and dark, or good and evil." It is this ability of artificial light to affect natural emotions that is an intriguing part of the artist's contemporary practice.

Furthermore, with the advent of a culture circulating around social-networking sites and social-media platforms, humans have begun to consciously naturalise technology. Television is no longer a rolling stream of information but can be paused, restarted, recorded and replayed. The Internet similarly offers film, music, television and radio subject to the users whims. The hybrid space of the digital information-age, then, can be defined by its ability to arrest motion. Sherwood's *Screenshot Series*, stills lifted from a stalled online film-streaming site, engages with this concept. The plucking of images produced from a chance malfunction in a digital technology is a way for the artist, no longer the mere operator pressing play and pause, to reinstate his autonomy. Similarly, in his grid paintings, Sherwood suspends motion, deconstructing perception in the light of digital reality. The contours and colours on the canvas, chance gestural marks overlaid by structuring cells, are ambiguously poised between formation and disintegration.

Sherwood is highly aware of the material value and quality of his paints, brushes and canvases. This craftsmen's awareness, combined with his use of traditional and at times archaic techniques, provides a stimulating contrast to the artificial inspirations for his paintings. Using the historical avant-garde's old bastion of autonomy, the grid, and sensitively engaging with painting, film and photography, Sherwood offers us an assemblage of the self-expressive alongside social documentary; a concoction perfectly encapsulated in the title of his triptych 'Where I End and You Begin'.

TEXT TAKEN FROM THE ACCOMPANYING ESSAY BY GUY ROBERTSON

Born in Bristol (UK) in 1984, Rob Sherwood lives and works in London. He graduated 2008 from Chelsea College of Art and Design in London.