

LIAM GILLICK CASEY KAPLAN - NEW YORK



LIAM GILLICK, "Scorpion and und et Felix," 2012. Installation view at Casey Kaplan, New York. Courtesy Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo: Jean Vong.

"Scorpion and und et Felix," the title of Liam Gillick's new show at Casey Kaplan, doesn't exactly roll off the tongue, but it conveys the artist's ability to weld seemingly disparate elements together in a series of permutations. Take out an *und* and an *et*, and you get the English title of Marx's unpublished "humoristic novel," penned at the age of 19, which features the tailor Merten, his son Scorpion, his apprentice Felix and a dog. Instead of the eponymous characters, it is the tailor and the dog, Boniface, who are depicted in the three outsized vinyl wall-drawings that make this show visually arresting.

Two giant glasses half-filled with beer, placed on a white table that mirrors the gallery's front desk, invite the visitor to read the exhibition as a conversation. Stylized to evoke medieval woodcuts yet blown-up so as to appear disproportionately large, the black vinyl vignettes are starkly juxtaposed with minimalist powder-coated aluminum sculptures that come in a restricted palette of neutral gray, ivory, black and white tones contrasted with strident reds and yellows, the latter recalling De Stijl. These deliberately institutional colors, for which Gillick relies

on the RAL system used in powder coating, function as so many readymade units, not unlike the industrial found materials of standard length or shape to which they are applied.

Individual units appear either on their own, as in two of the floor-mounted rail sculptures, red and gray respectively, or stacked up on walls in a way that suggests blinds, in the case of matching black *Exterior Day Setting* and ivory *Interior Day Setting* (all works 2012), or else shelves in the *Wall Unit* trio that bespeaks Donald Judd's influence. And yet, outside of their wonted architectural context, such familiar, everyday structures as rails claim our attention as pure rather than applied art, placed as they are in full view on the floor or mounted onto walls at impractical heights and, by the same token, robbed of their functionality.

Agnieszka Gracza