

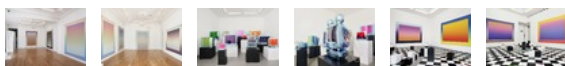
Rob Pruitt: The Suicide Paintings

Art

Painting

Massimo De Carlo

Until Sat Nov 30 2013



Rob Pruitt

'The Suicide Paintings'

© The Artist, Rob Pruitt, New York and Massimo De Carlo, Milan-London. Photo: Thierry Bal

Time Out says

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What's this? A solemn show by US prankster Pruitt? Fear not, the man who treated the art world to a 'Cocaine Buffet' in 1998 hasn't lost his ability to prompt an involuntary snort or two with his 'Suicide Paintings'.

Made up of gradated fields of colour, these abstractions sit somewhere between angsty colourfield painting and computer screensavers. With their window- and door-like frames they're a postmodern riff on the idea of painting as portal – inviting you to contemplate the infinite and what that might mean in an age of hyperconsumerism.

An artist for our time, Pruitt negotiates a world of beauty and blankness, profundity and shallowness with one eyebrow raised. References here to Mark Rothko's brooding canvases are set against splashes of trashy consumerism. Pruitt also serves up vulgar (and oddly outdated) trinkets in the form of boxy television sets and chunky remotes chromed in various hues, which are displayed on chequerboards of black and white cubes (a nod to minimalist Carl Andre) – the whole installation resembling a 1980s vision of a future that never quite came to pass.

As hinted at by the title, this is a show that deals in transcendence and nihilism, imagination and consumption. Given time, the paintings start to act on you in ways similar to the 'high' art that Pruitt appears to mock – appearing to change with the light, for example, or encouraging you to walk round the gallery to experience their subtle fluctuations. The challenge, as ever with Pruitt's art, is figuring out whether he's being serious or not.

Martin Coomer