

MARK TITMARSH

Black Rainbow

2012 | *Substation Gallery, Melbourne*

This artwork in this exhibition can be located in the field of expanded painting with a specific focus on the spatialisation of colour in the visual art disciplines of painting, video and installation. The works question the nature of visual imagery in an age of electronic media especially the presumption that image making is solely a two dimensional practice. The show was commissioned by the curator Jessica Bridgfoot.

The aesthetic premise of these works is that the artist can use any coloured thing to create work and is not restricted to traditional mark making tools like the brush or industrially produced liquid paints. As Stephen Melville (2001) argues, “painting has no essence outside of history, gathering and dispersing itself at every moment”, in this case dispersing away from brush and easel towards other kinds of mass-produced objects. The curator described the work as also linked to “appropriation and reworking of media images as a device to convey ideas” and that my work “uses found book jackets and spontaneous painting to explore the idea of writing and communication in colour.”

These works contribute to the field of contemporary painting by offering alternate models of practice that move beyond the material constitution of the work of art, which has become increasingly relative to the means, location and context of display. In this situation the ‘visual’ aspect can become inexplicit, and in some cases time or temporality of viewing becomes more important than the actual physical aspect of the painted work.

Black Rainbow Catalogue

MARK TITMARSH
Black Rainbow

Installation Shot



MARK TITMARSH
Black Rainbow

Black Rainbow catalogue with essay
by Mark Titmarsh
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The Substation Gallery
1 Market Street
Newport VIC 3015
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Thur June 28 - Sun 22 July 2012
Gallery Hours
Thursday to Sunday 11am - 5pm
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Supporting Partners



Black Rainbow
Mark Titmarsh

r + y + b = p¹

COLOUR

Colour is one peculiar item. I know it when I see it but when it comes to speaking or writing colour, something else happens, that is neither colour nor language. The more we talk about colour the more we talk about language and its limitation at the phenomenal edge of perception. Because of this, as David Batchelor demonstrates in his book *Chromophobia*², we tend to live in a world of colour prejudices, most of which fall on the side of deeply ingrained cultural taboos against colour, that align good taste and cultural sophistication with a severe restriction on the use of colours. As such the West is inherently chromophobic, equating taste and sophistication with clothes, houses and paintings that are black, white, grey, brown, navy blue and olive green. This is to be contrasted with chromophilia³, a wantonness of colour which erupts in the excessiveness of the feminine, primitive, infantile, vulgar, queer or pathological. This apartheid of colour is also reinforced by the ancient argument between colour and line, dating back to Aristotle who had it that the repository of thought in art is line, the rest is ornament.⁴

Ever since then colour has been understood as superficial, an ephemeral occurrence on the surface of things, whereas line and the non-coloured is deep, permanent, structural and meaningful.

Despite some of the prohibitions against immodesty in colour, the meaning of the most basic term in this discussion, namely colour itself, is poorly understood. As Umberto Eco claims colour is 'one of the worst muddles in the history of science.'⁵ To put it even more clearly in its obscurity, John Lyons argues that 'colour is real but colours are not.'⁶ By this he means that the experience of colour is verifiable, it surrounds us at all times, but the words we use to divide the spectrum of colour into functional divisions is quite arbitrary and untranslatable between different cultures and ages. The Inuit have a vast language for the colours we call white, the French use brown and purple as interchangeable in certain situations. Russians see two colours where

we just see blue, and Hindus don't differentiate red and orange. The word red, or any colour term in any language, has no inherent chromatic value and is only an arbitrary signifier vulnerable to cultural and historical differences. Colour is there, but it continually slips through the grasp of linguistic possession.

Batchelor cites Plotinus⁷ to show us why. In short, there is an incommensurability between colour and language because colour is indivisible, there are no breaks in the rainbow, while language is based on divisions and conceptual units that contradict colour's natural tendency to 'spread, flow, bleed, stain, soak, seep, and merge.'⁸

COLOUR IS



Colour is not a spectacle or an element of form, but a necessary precondition to both. I try to express my feeling for colour in all sorts of allusions, it is luscious, exquisite, intense, but colour is more than my sensory experience, it moves me to a place of ecstatic embeddedness. One way of remembering the forgotten of colour is through painting. In this state, touching colour as a maker, or being touched by colour as a viewer, is much the same thing. It begins with seeing colour, then really seeing colour, then touching colour, then feeling colour, then knowing colour, then being in colour, then in colour, being.

Colour is, but has not yet been named⁹ since it is essentially resistant to nomination.¹⁰ Colour rains down from the sky in the warmth of the sun and erupts up out of the earth as raw pigment and the hues of nature. Colour is awesome in its presence, it is in everything, on everything, everything is shot through with colour, colour shines out from a world of things, and in its shining brings a world into existence. Colour emerges from the obscure ground of things, from everything, it is all around like air. We are so immersed in it, that it is taken as granted, becoming unthought, a background phenomenon, until a sunset or a painting reminds us of its uncanny way of being surprising, awesome, astounding. Colours are all at once the ground, the secret soul of what is below, the ideas, and what sublimates the surface, the ideas, substance, figure, and general harmony, the life of God.¹¹ Colour is the beginning of an experience at the tip of my body that keeps on travelling through me, it goes from sensation to perception, to affect, to my sense of being in the world. In this movement from perception to affect and being, colour cracks open the form-spectacle.¹²

COLOURIST

In the battle between idea and percept, idea will win out, as exemplified in the dominance of Conceptual art over Op art. Even in the way Andy Warhol's work generates lots of discussion about media and popular culture but not as much about his sensual use of colour, particularly industrial colours. Colourist artists are usually those associated with a kind of anti-realism, breaking with the natural colours of things; to make colour an expressive, affective or formal element as in Impressionism, Fauvism, abstraction, and colour field.

The nature of colour for a colourist changes with time and according to the presence of pigments and how they are harnessed. In the early 20th century colour came from earthy pigments captured in a tube, later on synthetic colours were produced in tins and made from laboratory concoctions, now colour is largely pixel based. The demand for colour in various non-art situations, house paint and industrial surfaces, pushed the nature of art making away from the accurate representation of flesh to the seductive representation of colour that might compete with the spectacular materials of the modern world. To be a colourist today, well after Warhol and Judd, means thinking colour anew, specifically in terms of the ubiquity of coloured plastics and the plasticity of colour on an electronic screen. As Batchelor points out the difference between colour then and colour now is symbolised by the difference between the colour wheel and the colour chart.

The colour wheel is historically steeped and scientifically justified in its hierarchies of colour, that rationalise the visible and makes it ready for representation. Whereas the colour chart is a disposable list of readymade colour in a grammarless accumulation of colour units¹³ that strips colour free from colour theory and places it in an entirely autonomous zone.

To find another concrete practice for colour requires another kind of making and thinking, that is on both counts, neologicistic. Ultimately it involves refiguring the presence of paint and the object of painting itself. Thinking colour and making colour in an expanded form involves a radical refiguring of the presence of the painted image and the object based nature of painting. Riffing on painting, mixing colour in different painted materials, I leave things out and introduce new things that are not nameable as painting but nevertheless originate within the differential field of colour. While many aspects of painting fall away in the act of forming hybrid connections, one primary component continues to hold it together, namely colour. The medium of painting however deconstructed or expanded, has become the entity to whom 'the work of colour is addressed.'

13. Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, pp104-105 / *Images: (front) Mark Titmarsh, Library of Congress, 2011, installation view, mixed media / (back panel) Mark Titmarsh, Ralph Lauren, 2011, acrylic on paper (slip jacket) / (centre page) Mark Titmarsh, Book of Light, 2011, acrylic paint on acrylic glass' / All photos by Arthur Geogerson*

Footnotes: 1. $r(\text{red}) + y(\text{yellow}) + b(\text{blue}) = p(\text{painting})$. If $r + y + b = p$, then $p + np = ep$. When $r = \text{red}$, $y = \text{yellow}$, $b = \text{blue}$, $p = \text{painting}$, $np = \text{not painting and ep} = \text{expanded painting}$. In long form, if $r + y + b = p = \text{painting}$, then $p + np = ep = \text{expanded painting}$. Therefore, $p + np = ep$. 2. *Reaction Books*, 2010. 3. Batchelor, *Ibid*, p 21. 4. *Ibid* p29. 5. Umberto Eco, *How Culture conditions the Colours we See*, in David Batchelor (Ed), *Colour, Whitehead and MIT Press*, 2008, p 178. 6. Paraphrasing his quote in Batchelor, *Chromophobia*, p90. 7. *Ibid* pp 85-8. 8. *Ibid* p 86

9. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, Chicago, 1987, p.189. 10. Stephen Melville, *Color Has Not Yet Been Named: Objectivity in Deconstruction*, in Brunette and Wills (Eds), *Deconstruction and the Visual Arts*, Cambridge Univ Press, 1994, pp 33-48. 11. Michel Haar, *In The Measure-Porty Aesthetics Reader*, Northwestern University Press, 1993, p 185. 12. *Ibid* 188

Price List

Library of Congress 6

- a. Malevich and the American Legacy
59 x 119cm, \$950
- b. Shoes, Toy, Knife
19 x 61cm, \$250
- c. Meine Welt
200 x 120cm, \$2200
- d. Racing in the Dark
67 x 149.5cm, \$950
- e. Music
120 x 80.5cm, \$950
- f. VirtualPolitik
24 x 61cm, \$250

- Kevin Roche 2011, 28.5 x 76.8, \$450
- On Illustration, 2012, 18.7 x 13.1 x 1.3, \$350
- Possessed, 2012, 23.4 x 54, \$450
- Nord, 2012, 32.5 x 30 x 2cm, \$750
- Rainbow, 2012, 33.2 x 27 x 2cm, \$750
- Horses, 2012, 42.7 x 117.2 cm, \$850
- Victore, 2012, 89.7 x 60.5, \$850
- Viola, 2012, 29.2 x 98.3, \$850
- On what matters, 2012, 44 x 65.7 x 5.5cm, \$750
- Copenhagen, 2012, 120.5 x 99.3cm, \$850
- Girl illustrated, 2012, 24.5 x 60.2 cm, \$450

7. Colour for Websites, 2011
acrylic on paper (dust jacket), 90 x 66.5 cm

8. Phenomenological Investigations of Aristotle, 2011
acrylic on paper (dust jacket), 30.5 x 52.5 cm

9. Star of Hope, 2011
acrylic on paper (dust jacket), 27.5 x 78 cm

(c) Thomas Phifer, 2011
acrylic paint on plastic (slip jacket) on acrylic glass,
variable dimensions

(f) Roni Horn, 2011
acrylic on paper (slip jacket), 19.9 x 28.8 x 4 cm

(g) Ralph Lauren, 2011
acrylic on paper (slip jacket), 40 x 31 x 6.5 cm

(h) architecture for the future, 2011
acrylic on plastic (dust jacket), dimensions variable

(j) Grace, 2011
acrylic on paper (slip jacket), 28.7 x 37.2 x 6.4 cm

(n) FANATICISM, 2011
acrylic on paper (dust jacket) on alucobond, variable
dimensions
each \$750

- 4. Library of Light, 2011
 - a. Book of Light 3 (yellow)
8.5 x 12 x 4cm, \$350
 - b. Book of Light 4 (blue/magenta)
15 x 18.5 x 4cm, \$750
 - c. Book of Light 5 (red/blue)
19 x 15 x 4cm, \$750
 - d. Book of Light 6 (red)
31 x 23 x 4cm, \$950
 - e. Book of Light 7 (blue/red)
20 x 35 x 4cm, \$950
 - f. Book of Light 8 (green/magenta)
18.5 x 15 x 4cm, \$750
 - g. Book of Light 9 (red)
10 x 8.5 x 4cm, \$350
- each is acrylic paint on acrylic glass

- 5. Chromo-man 1, 2011, DVD, 16:9, 4 mins
performed at Artspace, Sydney
- 6. Chromo-man 2, 2011, DVD, 16:9, 3 mins
performed at Loose Projects and MOP Projects,
Sydney
- 7. Chromo-man 3, 2011, DVD, 16:9, 4 mins
Performed at Tin Sheds, Sydney

each video is an edition of 10, \$750 each

8. Chromophilic 2.1 (fluro-green), 2009,
acrylic glass, \$3500

9. Chromophilic 2.1 (fluro-pink), 2009,
acrylic glass, \$3500

SUB12

**OPENING
RECEPTION
THURS 28 JUNE
6-8PM**



28 JUNE—16 SEPT 2012
12 ARTISTS. 12 WEEKS.
12 AMBITIOUS NEW WORKS

28 June—22 July Santina Amato, Trevelyan Clay, Ry Haskings, Mark Titmarsh
26 July—19 Aug Rebecca Agnew, Juan Ford, Steven Rendall, Sanne Mastrom
23 Aug—16 Sept Steven Asquith, Sanja Pahoki, Simon Pericich, Masato Takasaka



THE SUBSTATION
CENTRE FOR ART & CULTURE

1 Market Street
Newport VIC 3015
www.thesubstation.org.au

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Image: Ry Haskings, the thirty cases of major zeman strach, screen print, 2012

SUB12



28 JUNE—22 JULY
SANTINA AMATO
TREVELYAN CLAY
RY HASKINGS
MARK TITMARSH

Presenting Partner



CURATOR'S FOREWORD

In its third year, SUB12 is a major annual three-month exhibition program presenting newly commissioned work by twelve leading contemporary Australian artists presented in partnership with Hobsons Bay City Council.

Under brief 'Twelve Artists, Twelve Weeks, Twelve Ambitious New Works' I approached SUB12 as an evolutionary show that tracks current interesting movements in contemporary art practice. Over three months we experience the work of twelve leading contemporary artists in three exhibitions. Each artist creative and diverse in their response to the spaces of the Substation, which are idiosyncratic in their industrial markings.

This first exhibition features significant works from artists Santina Amato, Trevelyan Clay, Ry Haskings and Mark Titmarsh. If there were a common thread which links the works of these four artists it is the appropriation and reworking of media images as a device to convey ideas in their practice. In his series of paintings, Trevelyan Clay uses modernist painting techniques to translate images of 1980s Platform computer games. Mark Titmarsh uses found images of book jackets and overlays spontaneous expressionist painting to explore the idea of writing and communicating in colour.

Ry Haskings employs a kind of *six degrees of separation* technique linking a soviet communist propaganda television show to a Clint Eastwood film, a Disney film and a German rock band. Santina Amato's video works draw on pop culture and film noir references to create an uncanny digital femme fatale character amidst a seductive mise-en-scene. In this sense aspects of these works highlight the interest of artists of this generation - borne from an image-centric society with a complex matrix of media machines generating populist and political propaganda and digital escapism overtaking real life. It makes me nostalgic for Clay's era of Platform computer games, where graphics were inspired by the principles of aesthetics, characters were fictional and there was a clear end game. For a further discussion of the works in this exhibition read Ash Kilmartin's insightful catalogue essay published overleaf.

The Substation would again like to thank Hobsons Bay City Council for their commitment to the presentation of new contemporary art in Melbourne's West. Thank you to artists Santina Amato, Trevelyan Clay, Ry Haskings and Mark Titmarsh for their dedication and thoughtfulness in the creation of these ambitious and intelligent works. Stay tuned till August for the next SUB12 instalment...

Jessica Bridgfoot

MARK TITMARSH

CURRENTLY LIVES AND WORKS SYDNEY

Mark Titmarsh PhD, (born 1955, Ingham, Australia) is a visual artist working in painting, video and text. In the 1980s he won awards at Ann Arbor and Montreal International Festivals. Mark has worked as co-editor of the Visual Arts magazine, On the Beach and as a new image painter included in *Perspective*, Art Gallery of NSW, 1989. In early 2006 he was a cofounder of the artist run space, *Loose Projects*. His screen based work included video and experimental websites that were exhibited in Multimedia Arts Asia Pacific in 2000. His paintings and film work are currently held in public collections across Australia, and in private collections in Europe and the United States. Mark is currently a tenured, part time lecturer in the School of Design, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, where he has taught Image Making and Interdisciplinary Studies since 1999.

Installation images from *Black Rainbow* 2012: Library of Congress 2012; acrylic paint, found book jackets, plastic, acrylic glass, variable dimensions



#1/3
 limited
 edition
 catalogue

28 JUNE—22 JULY
SANTINA AMATO
TREVELYAN CLAY
RY HASKINGS
MARK TITMARSH

26 JULY—19 AUG
REBECCA AGNEW
JUAN FORD
STEVEN RENDALL
SANNE MESTROM

23 AUG—16 SEPT
STEVEN ASQUITH
SANJA PAHOKI
SIMON PERICICH
MASATO TAKASAKA



1 Market Street, Newport VIC 3205
 Tel: (03) 9398 1100
 www.the-substation.org.au

Mark Titmarsh

Lives and works in Sydney

Black Rainbow

2012

Various works

Expanded painting is painting about painting, painting that is more than painting, painting that dissimulates into objects, videos, and texts.

It is borne out of the dialectical tension between skills crafted in the painting studio and the political critique of art world structures. In it, frame, image and surface, are challenged so that the whole edifice of painting is dismantled. Expanded painting functions as an ontological cut delivering a monstrous thickness, beyond image and surface, compelled by the phenomenal experiences of the world, multiplied exponentially and existentially by the plasticity of colour.

The spectacular nature of colour in all its contemporary forms, becomes the medium through which painting retains a certain kind of presence, even if it should be as an uncanny absence.

In the current situation there is nowhere that colour can't go. There are green stripes on toothpaste as it extrudes from the tube, cars and cleaning utensils have an infinite array of tones, human skin as well as everything plastic can be injected with myriad colour variations. Wherever colour is, in commodities, on screen interfaces, in experiential environments, painting can take a stand, addressing colour as that which is environmentally all around. The presence of paint is no longer constrained by pigment in a tube, but must also include any object that has been invested with colour such as string, clothing, furniture, cars and buildings. Likewise, the object of painting can no longer be confined by a flat surface but must include works that spread out across space and time encroaching on other media like sculpture, installation, performance and video.

Never judge a painting by its surface, never judge a book by its cover.

Practically speaking the dustjacket of a book protects from wear and tear and projects the essence of its contents. It is a surface that contains a trace of something far more complex, something that comes from the depths of thinking and writing. When a dustjacket becomes the surface of painting it works visually as an edifice on which colour can hang, the backdrop for a conceptual shadow cast by the luminous physicality of paint.

In this work, the graphic structure of dustjacket design, its digital rectangularity, is the geometric armature that holds biomorphic colour like a garment draped from a hanger. Consequently the intimate relationship between books and painting is re-established. Particularly when we remember that in both Persian and European traditions, illuminated manuscripts provided the space for painting to happen. When illumination stepped off the page onto the wall, it set off on a course away from the book, but always looking back to it.

While many aspects of painting fall away in the act of forming hybrid connections, with books and other media, one primary component continues to hold it together, namely colour. The medium of painting however deconstructed or expanded, has become the entity to whom the work of colour is addressed.

PRESS RELEASE



BLACK RAINBOW Mark Titmarsh

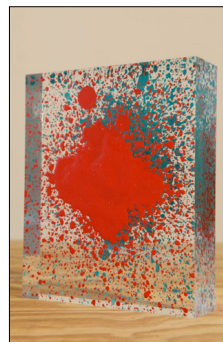
The Substation | Gallery | 1 Market Street |
Newport VIC 3015

Launch | Thursday 28 June 2012 @ 6 - 8pm

Exhibition Dates | Fri June 28 – Sun 22 July 2012

Artist Website | www.marktitmarsh.com.au

This solo exhibition by Mark Titmarsh explores the spectacular nature of colour and its importance in maintaining the presence of painting in its interface with other media especially sculpture, installation, performance and video. The show will include works on various materials including perspex, book dustjackets and videos of performances that show colour in the trans-substantiated form of coloured balls and spray string. The accompanying catalogue essay looks at the historical prejudices against colour and the ways certain artists are nominated, colourists, indicating a particular relationship with colour from pigments of the earth, to synthetic laboratory colours to screen based pixel colour.



Biography

Mark Titmarsh's work is made under the rubric of 'expanded painting', painting about painting, or painting that dissimulates into objects, videos and texts. Recent work has included paintings on industrial materials, environments of fluorescent string and video works for mobile phones. In early 2006 he was a cofounder of the artist run space, Loose Projects, Sydney.

Mark is currently a tenured, part time lecturer in the Faculty of Design, Architecture and Building, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia, where he has taught Image Making and Interdisciplinary Studies in the School of Design since 1999.

His paintings and filmwork are currently held in public collections across Australia, and in private collections in Europe and the United States.