

Neil Campbell & Alexandre da Cunha

28 October – 8 December 2007

Opening Sunday 28 October from 16.30 thru 19.00

Office Baroque is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Canadian artist Neil Campbell and British-Brazilian artist Alexandre da Cunha.

Painting directly on to the wall, Neil Campbell's geometric shapes and patterning transform the gallery's interior. He intervenes in the architecture, toying with the experience of space and addressing questions of viewer perception. Letting intuition guide the process, he divines 'sweet spots' within the given space, scaling his shapes and situating them by making references to a system of harmonics. His pitch-perfect way of blending architecture, placement on the wall, size, and edges produces retinal and phenomenological power.

A longer look reveals that his painted designs derive from a wide range of inspirations: from the history of Western art to commercial and popular art as well as to observations made during his daily experiences. Their careful compositions and proportions are the result of obsessive attention. The works are carefully fitted to the exhibition space: the work appropriates the wall and acts as a mediator between the viewer and the space.

Campbell's works achieve a scale that is appropriate to address the vertical human form. They are not simply intended as optical events but are intended to engage the viewer's entire physiology. As Roy Arden observed "Standing before his paintings, one feels their calculated effect on our bodies and senses -far from 'abstract', the experience is both physical and spiritual, in a manner that most abstract painting has only succeeded in symbolizing".

Campbell revisits ideas and artists. There are shades of Lawrence Weiner, James Turrell, Robert Irwin, and Bridget Riley hanging over this mesmerizing outing. But so does the spirit of something deeply committed, convincing, and felt.

Alexandre da Cunha has long been interested in the stereotypes propagated under the guise of national identity and takes simple everyday materials and domestic objects to expand their existence in the world. His practice has been about his personal encounter with things in everyday life and a straightforward intervention on those elements. By highlighting specific aspects of objects that surround us, he imposes a possible entry for

them in what is known as the art world. He is interested in seeing those elements taking new forms and gradually making their trajectory to become sculptures, working with notions around appropriation and re-contextualization.

Da Cunha has been predisposed toward offbeat approaches to creativity by having been born and raised in Brazil, a nation famous for its resourcefulness and innovative problem solving. His "tropical ready-mades" go beyond the Duchampian tradition and are not being restricted by historical quotes only. What looks quite rigid and very formal and elegant at first has a hidden comical side that reveals themselves upon closer looking. Da Cunha uses mundane items to create an elegant, minimal aesthetic. His body of work has clear links with the history of geometrical abstraction, both in the West and in Brazil with neoconcretismo.

For this exhibition da Cunha explores his knowing splicing of the high and low with a series of canvases kitted out with protruding straw hats. Beach hats are tacked on to textured canvases – ranging from traditional painters' linen, dustsheets and even beach towels- and protrude from the walls. Their rims are meticulously flattened into hypnotic spirals, while the crowns pop out, almost inviting you to touch them. His interest to these items comes through shapes, and colours –and although he is interested in their cultural use and the narrative that they have, he treats them as if they were pure shapes. Each canvas suggests an individual holiday story, broken down in to fragments and then stitched back together again, poking gentle fun at the rites of relaxation. With their general title, *Nudes*, the works play on a flirtatious coyness on the semi-transparent surfaces and tropical stereotypes.

#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Neil Campbell lives and works in Vancouver. He studied at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, The Vancouver School of Art and Concordia University in Montreal where he received a MFA in 1979. Over the past years, Campbell has been the subject of solo exhibitions, including Blanket Gallery in Vancouver (2011); Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York (2008); Gallery Franco Noero, Turin (2011, 2007 & 2005); Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver (2006), Centre d'Art Contemporain de Montreal, Montreal (1993) and Andrea Rosen, New York (1990). His work was included in group exhibitions at Veneklasen Werner, Berlin (2011); Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, Grenoble (2009); Klosterfelde, Berlin (2009); The Balmoral, Venice (2008); The Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2004), Art and Public, Geneva (1996) and Queens Museum, New York (1990). In 2006, Campbell curated PAINT at the Vancouver Art Gallery, a survey of painting in British Columbia since the 1960's.

Alexandre da Cunha lives and works in London. He studied at the Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado, São Paulo, the Royal College of Art, London and the Chelsea College of Art and Design where he received a MA in 2000. Over the past years, da Cunha

has been the subject of solo exhibitions, including Le Grand Café, Saint Nazaire (2012); Thomas Dane, London (2012); Galeria Luisa Strina, Sao Paulo (2011); Camden Arts Center, London (2009), Sommer & Kohl, Berlin (2008) and CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco (2007). His work was included in group exhibitions at Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2012); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2011); Kurimanzutto, Mexico City (2010); Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2009); ICA Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2006) and the Liverpool Biennial (2002). Da Cunha is one of the key featured artists in this year's Sao Paulo Biennial (7 September – 9 December, 2012).

OFFICE BAROQUE GALLERY

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Gallery hours:  
Wednesday – Saturday, 14.00 – 18.00  
and by appointment