

Simon Periton

'The Rose Engine'

23 February - 23 March 2013

The Modern Institute are delighted to present 'The Rose Engine', an exhibition of new work by London based artist Simon Periton.

Periton's third solo exhibition at The Modern Institute has developed out of his interest in decorative tradition and its link to the world of finance and security. Periton has created intricate cut-outs in steel and aluminum alongside large-scale, layered spray-paintings on paper and glass, which toy with opposing themes and imagery already prevalent in his work: order and anarchy, alchemy, astrology, culture and counterculture. 'The Rose Engine' portrays a scene of decadence brought about by an amalgamation of the decorative and beautiful with allusions to economic decline.

The exhibition's title 'The Rose Engine' refers to the specialised geometric lathe, which produced complex rose-like patterns called Guilloches. These intricate patterns were specifically designed to be forgery proof and were used on mass produced printed matter such as bank notes and postage stamps, as well as the exclusive Fabergé eggs.

The context of the gallery space has been approached with the freshness of a studio environment, allowing the process of research, experimentation and production to become a transitory component in the exhibition.

Anchoring the space is the silhouette of 'The Hanging Debtor', suspended, upside down from the central beams. Made from water cut steel, with the residue of layers of spray-painting, the debtor's image is based on a German illustration from 1438. He hangs upside down appearing calm and content, the bags of coins in his cloak defying gravity. His figure acts as a stencil to the gallery space, part obscuring, part accentuating the surrounding elements. Formally this piece connects with the large stenciled works on paper and with the three giant scalpels.

These over-sized scalpels are reminiscent of the form of a guillotine blade; more specifically Periton states that they refer to the German Fallbeil or falling axe, used during the 18th/19th centuries to execute debtors. One of these works, titled, 'Executrix' incorporates two oversized scalpels, installed just above head height. One is polished and lacquered gold, the other is powder coated black and spray painted, alluding to the contrast between the beautiful and luxurious, the disturbed and corrupt.

Prevalent within the wall-based works are the recurring motifs of eyes and holes. One of Periton's large spray paintings on paper, titled 'Vigilante' depicts an eye on a shepherd's crook in a secluded landscape, human civilization existing only in the far distance. The image is an enlarged version of 'The Vigilant Eye', taken from *Lux Claustris (The Light of the Prison)*, a collection of engravings by Jacques Callot made in 1628. This all Seeing Eye re-appears in several of Periton's other works, maintaining a constant, watchful presence over the space.

'The Supervisor', a round concave glass painting hangs at one end of the gallery space. The piece incorporates the enlarged image of Benjamin Franklin's eye taken from the 100-dollar banknote portrait. This eye is entwined with patterns from an early doily piece ('Black Riot Fart Doily', 1997). The glass painting is partially mirrored and stares back across the space, through 'The Hanging Debtor' towards the other Vigilant Eye.

Simon Periton (b. 1964, Kent; Lives and works in London) graduated from Central St. Martin's School of Art, London in 1990. He has exhibited widely in Britain and internationally. Periton recently collaborated with Alan Kane on an installation at Garden of Reason, Ham House, Richmond-upon-Thames.

Major commissions include 'Bombyx Mori', a light installation for the D-shaped garden at Firstsite, Colchester, 2012; and 'Andromeda', an outdoor project for the Great Britain Trust, Bristol, 2011.

Selected solo exhibitions include: 'The Asbo Mystery Play and other public works' / 'The Gild The Lily Files' (with Alan Kane), Sadie Coles HQ, London, 2012; 'Spirits of Salt', Sadie Coles HQ, London, 2009; 'A Rabble of Butterflies', The Galerist, Istanbul, 2008; 'Simon Periton', The Modern Institute, Glasgow, 2007; 'Flag', Henry Moore Gallery, Leeds, 2004; and 'Mint Poisoner', Inverleith House, Edinburgh, 2003.

Selected group exhibitions include: 'The Hepworth Wakefield: A Celebration Backbone: Modern British Sculptors', NewArtCentre, Roche Court, Salisbury, 2011; 'Undone: Making and Unmaking in Contemporary Sculpture', Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2010; 'The Dark Monarch: Magic and Modernity in British Art', Tate St. Ives, 2009 (touring to the Towner Gallery, Eastbourne, 2010); and 'Wunschwelten, Schrin Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, 2007.