

Esther Schipper

Liam Gillick

Fact Structures

Amount Structures

Language Structures

March 15–April 13, 2024



Esther Schipper is pleased to present **Fact Structures Amount Structures Language Structures**, Liam Gillick's tenth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Liam Gillick's new works draw on the artist's long-standing interest in how ideologies find form. Seeking new ways to represent complex interrelations—material and human—his work involves installation, sculptural work, films, graphics, and texts. All these different approaches are an integral part of a coherent project. A central aspect of his work has been the representation of production as it concerns changing processes of manufacturing, construction, and communication in a period of radical upheaval and displacement.

Recent bodies of works have functioned as abstractions derived from the functional organs of a building. Resembling heat sinks or vents they have suggested the building as a body and an abstraction that draws inspiration from server farms, hard drives and circuits. Gillick's use of mathematical equations pursued a similar search for an abstracted language, their economy and beauty suggesting a parallel visual language that exists as pure conceptual potential.

In the course of recent large-scale institutional projects, in particular **Filtered Time** at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin in 2023, Gillick has developed a new underlying narrative in response to his continued engagement with the history of standardized graphical systems.

The new body of work draws conceptually on the work of Otto Neurath and Gerd Arntz who in the 1920s developed a system to simply represent complex statistical information, known as the Vienna Method or, beginning in 1935, as ISOTYPE (International System of Typographic Picture Education). A philosopher and sociologist, Neurath recognized in cinema and advertising a visual mode of communication that could be adopted to convey

information. With the development of a quantitative system using pictograms, Neurath sought to make specialized knowledge legible to non-specialized mass audiences. The graphics for these early modern pictograms were created by German artist Gerd Arntz. An instrument of education, the visual language was intended to reduce the role of convention, custom and schooling in the reception of knowledge and with its comparative signs also stimulate both intellect and imagination.

With this exhibition, Gillick proposes a new model for representing the processes of advanced production. The abstract forms in this exhibition represent a more elusive visual language that might represent new advanced forms of production today. This exhibition introduces three unresolved artistic elements that operate alongside each other, in a series of contradictory parallels. Color has always pervaded Gillick's work where it is present as a theoretical subject. He deploys the history of color theory, for practical applications, and makes use of its sheer impact, and phenomenological effects. Resolute color choices for individual works and their elements act as a reminder of the artist's broad understanding of its transformative power. The works address the gap between what is desired, what is produced and how it is described.

Three distinct types of wall-mounted works attempt to find abstraction in the material structures of advanced production. The wall works are constructed from lightweight aluminium t-slot extrusions that are commonly used for the construction of laboratory rigs, CNC machines, and advanced production lines. These extrusions create self-contained systems evocative of the mute, smooth flows of advanced production in stasis.

Each work is accompanied by a unique book jacket design featuring a new abstract neo-Isotype by Gillick on the cover. While the wall structures are clean, stark and direct – what they point to—represented by the paired potential book—is interwoven and elusive. The neo-isotype marks are a visual language consciously derived from the legacy of attempts in 1920s Europe, to rationalize understanding of production, consumption and social development. Yet in this case they are entirely abstract and elusive in terms of precise representation, developing forms of contemporary abstraction as modes of production and consumption continue to evolve and mutate.

Liam Gillick was born in 1964 in Aylesbury, England. He studied at Goldsmiths, University of London. He lives and works in New York.

A selection of Liam Gillick's critical writing appeared as **Proxemics: Selected Writings** (1988–2006) in 2007 and his artistic writing as **Allbooks** in 2009. In 2016, Columbia University published **Industry and Intelligence: Contemporary Art Since 1820**, an analysis of the origins of contemporary art.

In 2009, Gillick represented Germany at the 53rd Venice Biennale. He participated in the 50th Venice Biennale (2003) and in documenta X in Kassel (1997). Gillick was the artistic director of the 2016 Okayama Art Summit, entitled **Development**. Recent institutional solo exhibitions include: **Filtered Time**, Pergamonmuseum, Berlin (2023); **The Work Life Effect**, Gwangju Museum of Art, Gwangju (2021); **Stinking Dawn** (with Gelatin), Kunsthalles Wien, Vienna (2019); **Standing on Top of a Building: Films 2008-2019**, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples (2019); **Folded Extracted Personified**, Qatar MIA Park, Doha (2019).

Gillick's work is held in the collections of Arts Council Collection, London; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain (FNAC); Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; Lenbachhaus Museum, Munich; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate, London.

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