

PRESS RELEASE

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MARTIN SMITH

5 May - 18 June 2011

Martin Smith is not only a key figure in British ceramics, but also an exceptionally talented furniture maker, as can be seen in his exhibition of new work at Marsden Woo Gallery.

Smith sees himself as an artist, designing his work with the mindset of an architect, and meticulously planning each piece through engineer-like drawings and scale models. He uses a pared down minimalism, working within the confines of a particular set of geometric forms, making subtle rotations and reversals that alter the works entirely.

In this exhibition Smith explores an ongoing interest in the spatial impact of his work, through both his ceramic installations and furniture. Minimal yet elegant, his fully functional birch plywood furniture explores the encounter an object has with the space that surrounds it. In his sculptural installations the area between the pieces is as important as the physical elements they consist of. In some cases intense colour radiates from the interior of the object, which appears to float within its own specifically charged environment. His wall-based ceramic installations also play with perception, surfaced as they are with complex graphic prints.

'They are part of the same body of work, the same research question', he explains of the combination of furniture and ceramics. 'The ideas being explored are to do with defining space, but this is a sensation of particular spaces or places, visceral rather than intellectual.' Smith cites Donald Judd as an important influence on him, exploring our relationship to physical space through the objects that shape this. Like Judd, the question he continues to ask through his work is, 'how are particular sensations created?'

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Martin Smith studied at Bristol Polytechnic Faculty of Art from 1971-74, and at the Royal College of Art from 1975-1977. He has been a tutor of the Ceramics & Glass department at the Royal College of Art for many years, becoming a Professor in 1999. Smith has exhibited widely in both Solo and Group exhibitions. Examples of his ceramic work are held in numerous public collections worldwide including the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the National Museums of Modern Art, Tokyo and Kyoto; Los Angeles County Museum; and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

For more information or to arrange an interview with the artist please contact Tatjana Marsden or Alida Sayer
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