

Dazed Digital

Poppy Sebire's Line. Featuring work by Lewis Betts, John Dougill, Georgie Hopton, Edit Oderbolz and Amy Stephens, this expo looks at the trace, contour and mark of gestures.

Felicity Shaw, 18 April 2011



Sometimes the simplest image is the strongest, an idea that a collection of artists have drawn upon with the arrival of *Line* at the Poppy Sebire gallery this week. The exhibition will house the work of five artists using a variety of mediums to explore the different ways in which form, contour and mark interact with space and the gallery's dimensions. The contemporary exhibits - including paint work, installation and sculpture - redefine the ways in which we view and interact with shapes through angles, drapery, colour and object. We spoke to curator

and gallery director Poppy Sebire to find out how the simple line takes shape in the exhibition...

Dazed Digital: How did the idea for the exhibition come about?

PS: I came across the work of Edit Oderbolz at Art Statements, Basel 2010. Her work was swinging out from the wall and jutting into the space. Instantly commanding. I have wanted to show her work here in London ever since. Oderbolz manipulates curtain rails from their intended use into elegantly drawn lines that cut into negative space. She bends them from their supporting bar and from each new 'line' she hangs coloured and white drapery that extend into the room and drop to the floor. Line plays an important part in these spacial drawings, so I decided on 'line' as the idea behind this grouping of work. The four artists that are exhibiting here alongside Edit are from disparate disciplines but there is a linear conversation that runs throughout.

DD: Where do you think the power of the linear form lies?

PS: In its expression of something more than itself.

DD: How do the pieces in the exhibition interact with the gallery space?

PS: Lewis Betts has made a site-specific installation across one of the gallery walls. His line is routed into layered plywood which leans to the wall. His line continues through the layers and into the gallery wall itself. Amy Stephens' bronze, 'Birch in Space', is a cast of a branch stripped back to its essential form, playfully standing upright in the space at human height. This linear metal object glistens within the space making reference to a single mark on a blank page altering our spatial awareness of the gallery. As before, Edit's work appears to be falling from the wall and overflowing into the space, with the wall as canvas to its painterly hues. Shadows also play a role in her work – they double or triple the lines and add to their force and sense of theatricality.

DD: How do the sculpture pieces by Lewis Betts and Amy Stephens fit into the trace and mark of the line?

PS: In Lewis' work the graphic line is a routed line, more tenuous and ambiguous than a drawn line. The shadows cast by the stacks of plywood serve to 'model' the cut forms so that the works are more like relief sculptures in negative than a drawing marked on the surface. Where drawing attempts to consolidate form, the lines in Betts' installation unlocks its relative indeterminacy. He line moves from one surface to another and activates large areas of negative space between the layers. These are very tactile drawings in space.

Birch trees stand alone in isolated areas in Iceland. Stephens who did a residency there wanted to mimic the same feeling in her work in the gallery, as it stands alone in space. The bronze cast is made in 8 pieces from one section of birch tree bought back from Iceland. She removed several small branches, which is evident in the knots in the bronze work. The result is one singular, aesthetic form that, despite its occasional knotty crop, is a line drawn from the gallery floor up into the space.

DD: What other projects do you have coming up that you might be able to tell us about?

PS: We are very excited about showing Paul Housley's paintings at the end of May, so the show directly after 'Line'. His exhibition, 'A Maid for Paint', opens on 26th May and runs until the 2nd July. In the October slot we will be showing new work by James Aldridge. He hasn't shown in London since 2008 and this exhibition will include sculptural work, unseen before here in London. His painting 'Cold Mouth Prayer' hangs on the 7th Floor at the Tate Modern.

'Line' Exhibition runs until May 21, 2011, at the Poppy Sebire Gallery, London
All images courtesy the artists and Poppy Sebire gallery.

