

A THOUSAND YARD STARE

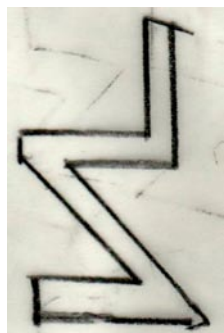
A role for drawing in contemporary painters' practice

12 February – 13 March 2010

Simon Callery
Maria Chevska
Jeffrey Dennis
Jeff Gibbons



SIMON CALLERY



MARIA CHEVSKA



JEFFREY DENNIS



JEFF GIBBONS

The **thousand yard stare** is a phrase originally coined by the ancient Greeks to describe the limp, unfocused gaze of a battle-weary soldier. It is a despondent stare, a symptom of severe psychological distress usually associated with soldiers but it is a state that can occur anywhere. To the practising contemporary artist, **Jo Melvin** writes in her exhibition essay, that this numbed stare implies 'the maker's detachment, disassociation from subject matter, or aesthetic judgment in favour of deadpan, automatic decision making. It also suggests tenacity in the face of odds.'

This exhibition brings together work from a diverse range of artists, primarily known as painters, and explores the importance that 'drawing' has assumed for them as a generator for ideas and problem solving. It offers a glimpse into the studio practice of each artists and shows the changing role that drawing has assumed and how the term 'drawing' in contemporary practice embraces a multiplicity of techniques and methods for developing thoughts, connections and anxieties as part of a visual thinking process.

Academic notions of drawing, if not replaced, have been augmented by an innovative rediscovery of drawing as a valuable part of studio practice that is reflected in the range of work selected: prints, collage, text and painting on paper and board, drawings on canvas, three dimensional drawings and drawings wrapped around objects. For **Maria Chevska** and **Jeff Gibbons** text is seen as an integral part of the drawing process. Their interests are in the relationship between the visual and the verbal, writing and gesture, historical narrative and contemporary culture. **Simon Callery** folds his drawings and saturates them with colour to explore alternative ideas to the image-based culture that dominates contemporary life. **Jeffrey Dennis's** drawings include actual things collaged onto the surface: tickets, lists, newspaper cuttings. Expired and discarded things that are subsumed into the drawings with a web of accumulated mark-making.

In Jo Melvin's words "Perhaps contingent on the idea of a thousand yard stare in drawing is an insouciance that can be seen in much contemporary drawing practice and it is where apparent disregard for seriousness leads to celebration of trivia, the absurd, the overlooked or the disregarded"