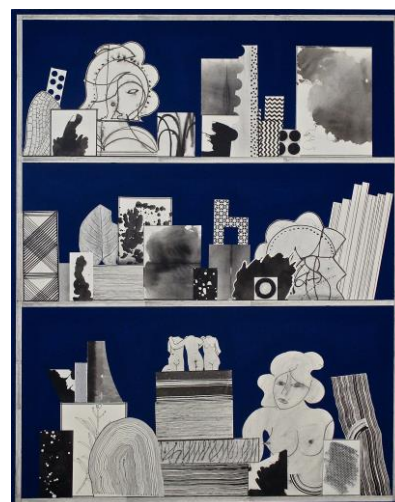


David Korty
Have / Had

07 November 2013 – 18 January 2014
69 South Audley St London W1
Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6pm

David Korty's latest exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ presents a series of eight new paintings alongside a series of ceramic sculptures which mark a dramatic new departure for the artist. Employing collage, ink and pencil, Korty's latest paintings are sizeable in scale and coolly understated in palette. Collectively titled *Blue Shelf*, they are each divided into multiple 'tiers', their crisply delineated compartments calling to mind the exacting proportions of Donald Judd's plywood boxes as well as the gridded or subdivided fields of various abstract painters. Yet Korty has arrayed these tiers with an assortment of monochrome shapes, conveyed in dilute ink and silhouetted against a midnight blue ground. Through a rhythmic interplay of line, shape and colour, he distances the paintings dramatically from their sources (mostly Korty's own drawings), creating images that are pregnant with ambivalence, lurching between representational and abstract modes.



The miscellaneous forms housed on Korty's 'shelves' range from recognisable ornaments (masks, busts, globes) to boxed-in sections of pattern, geometric cut-outs and gestural riffs. Certain works evoke the ephemera of the artist's studio – propped up studies and drawings, rows of books and nondescript containers. Reprising the age-old genre of still life, Korty extends the premise found in the paintings of Giorgio Morandi and others (where we again find parades of objects evoked through a restricted palette): the 'abstract' dynamics between shades and shapes become as important as figurative content. In this respect, the artist is responding to an impetus that has guided his practice for well over a decade. He simplifies and schematises a recognisable image almost to the point of banality, in order to expose its underlying structural dynamics and their beguiling decorative potential. Above all, these latest works consciously echo the angular structures and assorted, collaged fragments of synthetic Cubism – an aesthetic that has long filtered into Korty's art.

At the same time, the paintings' tiered structures and frontally-arranged 'curiosities' invoke traditional methods of display and collecting, for instance the Renaissance vogue for the Wunderkammer ('room of wonders') or the sprawling eclecticism of antiquarian displays. Korty's works therefore dramatise the ways in which art has traditionally been presented and looked at, while also striking a profound note of ambiguity. These 'cabinets of curiosities' exude the orderliness of cross-section plans at the same time as echoing cryptic chains of symbols or the convoluted folds of origami. Depth is an uncertain quantity: in contrast to the 'infinite' velvety blue of the background, the objects are often as flat as cardboard props and layered like theatrical scenery. Through their stark absence of colour, they are reminiscent of facsimiles or fragments of newspaper – Korty compels us to view them as mediations, even ghosts, of real-life forms. Scale is equally ambivalent; for example, a staggered sequence of oblongs at once intimates a line of book spines and a high-rise skyline.

Installed in sequence, the canvases take on the appearance of a frieze, combining into a cacophonous reel of geometric motifs, Modernist-style heads, swirls and amorphous blots. The internal structure of each work is therefore extended: collectively, the paintings describe a scheme which echoes the stylised scenes of Greek figure pottery, or Egyptian hieroglyphics poised between image and text. Korty thus dramatises the tension between a 'body of work' and its component parts. Each painting compresses a bustling mass of styles and motifs, yet each work is itself only a lone chapter within a larger panoramic arrangement.

In a seeming paradox, Korty's flattened and compartmentalised imagery has various sculptural precedents, not only in Judd's stacked modules, but in Louise Nevelson's boxed niches of monochrome bric-a-brac, or Edoardo Paolozzi's intricate amalgams of mechanical and organic subject matter in wood and metal. Perhaps in reflection of the sculptural possibilities suggested by the paintings, Korty has produced a series of works in ceramic which translate their simplified 'two-dimensional' silhouettes into free-standing objects – vases flanked by honeycomb latticework, or perforated vessels with semi-circular handles. Like the paintings, they mimic familiar objects while remaining multivocal, deflecting a single definitive interpretation.

David Korty (b. California, 1971) trained at the Rhode Island School of design and the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been exhibited widely throughout the United States and Europe, with recent solo exhibitions including those at Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2013), and Kimmerich, New York (2012). His work has featured in group shows including the Glasgow International Festival, Glasgow, UK (2012); *Painting Codes: I Codici della Pittura*, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Contemporanea di Monfalcone, Italy (2006); and *Painting on the Move*, Kunstmuseum Basel, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, and Kunsthalle Basel (2002). In 2008 a new book on the artist's work featuring a text by Rachel Kushner was published by Sadie Coles HQ, Michael Kohn Gallery and Koenig Books.

For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com