

RUDOLF STINGEL

08 Sept - 09 Oct 2004

private view, 08 Sept, 6-8pm

Rudolf Stingel's first exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ is a series of new gold wallpaper paintings. A composition of repeated units, the mechanically reproduced paintings initially appear to be identical elements forming a homogenous whole. On closer inspection idiosyncrasies come to light, signs of corruption in the production process, signs of human input, that render them unique parts of a unique whole and the end, or rather a stage, in an organic process.

At the 2003 Venice Biennale Rudolf Stingel created a silver room. Within the Italian pavilion, curated by Francesco Bonami, under the title *Sogni e Conflitti: La dittatura dello spettatore/ Dreams and Conflicts: The dictatorship of the spectator*, Stingel's installation captured the curatorial thread and brought it to life. The hoards of visitors making their art pilgrimage scratched their names, jokes, comments, images into the silver, like children on a school trip leaving their graffitied legacy on the walls of public toilets. As free space ran out people stuck on papers, photographs and objects, like votive offerings at a saint's shrine. An art shrine; visually, aesthetically, but at root the very antithesis; standing against the sacrosanct status of the work and demystifying the figure of the artist as damage was reconfigured as creation and the work became the ultimate collaborative project.

A path to the room in Venice can be traced back from 1989, when Stingel published a manual in English, Italian, German, French, Spanish and Japanese, 'Instructions, Istruzioni, Anleitung...', outlining the equipment and procedure that would enable anyone to create one of his paintings: an altruistic gesture, with which to counteract a culture of veneration. This democratic intent has been matched by Stingel's choice of materials; wallpaper, Styrofoam, carpets - ordinary, ubiquitous tools that nod towards the legacy of *arte povera*. In the selection of silver and gold asceticism is overruled by decadence, but these works stand alongside the others as attempts to disrupt the modernist monochrome. Working with strident orange or a jarring blue and pink floral patterned carpet Stingel launches an assault on the paradoxical idea of a neutral aesthetics. Decoration is allowed back, texture takes its place alongside the visual in this heightened sensory environment. Stingel disrupts our perception of the spaces we inhabit and our perception of the spaces of exhibition, as he destabilizes the accepted hierarchy between the work and the context.

Born in Italy, Rudolf Stingel lives and works in New York. He has exhibited widely throughout Europe and the United States, in both solo and group shows, including an installation with Felix Gonzalez Torres in the Neue Galerie Graz in Austria in 1994 and a mid-career retrospective at the Museo d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Trento, Italy in 2001. His work was included in the Venice Biennale in both 1993 and 2003 and in 2004 he collaborated with the Public Art Fund to create the site specific *Plan B* for the Grand Central Station, New York and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

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