

ANDREW BICK

GATE/GRID/TREE/ (NOTES/ON/CONCRETE)

APRIL 14 – MAY 26 / 2018

Von Bartha, Basel are pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new works from British artist Andrew Bick, running from 14 April – 26 May 2018, and titled *gate/grid/tree/(notes/on/concrete)*. One of the leading contemporary painters working in response to the tradition of constructivist art, Bick's technically complex and layered pieces merge drawing and painting, line and plane, transparency and opacity, to form a complex whole.

The exhibition takes two sources of inspiration as a starting point: the German artist Paul Klee's lecture diagrams, from *The Nature of Nature* (creating a tree structure from the number sequence 1:3:5:7:9), and the work of the American concrete poet Robert Lax, (1915-2000), whom Bick corresponded with. The resulting mix of influences and allusions generates repetitions of grid-like forms across the gallery space.

For ten years, Bick has been working with two singular grid structures as a basis for all his drawings and paintings, derived from an initial copy of a painting in 2008. This digitised grid format, consisting mainly of triangular outlines, he then projects onto his canvas. Bick transfers the lines onto the work's surface, keeping some elements and editing out others. His practice is thus one of constant evolution, with each new work existing as a variation of previous versions. Finally, by incorporating painterly elements into the multi-layered works, the resulting pieces generate interplay between gesture and geometry, rational and irrational processes. This method of reinvention - integral to Bick's practice - references key influences within the abstract and concrete movements, in particular Klee's concretised version of nature and Lax's contemplation of the world through an ordered sequence of words.

A central work at von Bartha, *gate/grid/tree*, revisits a motif previously included in Bick's solo exhibition at Haus Konstruktiv (2017), and is the point of inspiration for a forthcoming public commission by the artist launching in Piccadilly, London. At von Bartha, the repeated structure - a lattice of constructivist shapes referencing both nature and architecture - is presented as "wallpaper", lining the gallery's entrance space.

Expanding his motif to occupy the gallery's interior, a freestanding folded aluminum-grid sculpture occupies the back area of the gallery - marking a new departure for the artist and inspired by research for recent public commissions. The sculpture interacts with a series of new wall-based paintings which replicate the same 50mm wide line as the aluminum sections.

A shift in pace and mood is noticeable in a set of „slow-time paintings“ hung as a group at the back of the gallery. These works have been re-painted over the past five to ten years, covering or scraping off versions that Bick feels could take further interrogation. They reference, among others, Lax's poem *the light --- the shade*¹ which presents an interface between the absolutes of concrete principles and the eventualities of being alive. The works relate to the optical hesitations and unpredictability of everyday looking; for Bick they are both a visual poem and a delineation of the space between - "a logical concrete system and *shit that just happens*".

¹ Robert Lax, *the light --- the shade*, pendo verlag, Zurich 1989, p.6 ISBN 3 85842 166 9

About Andrew Bick

Andrew Bick (born 1963, Cheltenham) studied at Cheltenham College of Art, the University of Reading as well as the Chelsea School of Art and Design in London.

He is a lecturer at the Kingston University as well as at the University of Gloucestershire. He has given conference papers at ICA, TATE Modern, Leeds Art Gallery, Henry Moore Institute and the University of Gloucestershire and has written for publications including Art Monthly, the Brooklyn Rail, Kultureflash and Abstract Critical.

Recent major solo exhibitions include von Bartha, Basel (2012); Hales Gallery, London (2012), von Bartha, S-chanf (2013), and The Cornerstone Gallery at Liverpool Hope University (2015). He has also taken part in group exhibitions, including the Drawing Biennial, London (2013); Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven (2014); Newlyn Art Gallery & The Exchange, Penzance (2014); Platform A, Middlesbrough (2014); the Pizzuti Collection, Cleveland, Ohio (2014); Haus Konstruktiv, Zürich (2017) and The Wilson, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (2017).

In April 2018, Bick presents a public commission by Modus Operandi in London's Princes Arcade and he has also been commissioned to design a gender neutral pocket square for Drakes Menswear.