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photo: Philip Sayer

BRYAN ILLSLEY

partings and pipelines

11 February to 20 March 2010

Bryan Illsley shows a collection of new abstract paintings and a 9 metre long sculpture entitled *Pipeline*, which cuts through the middle of the gallery space. The paintings are predominantly grey, grave and dark, though each very different in its range of hues. The sculpture is uncompromisingly neutral in tone, with lines of almost emphatically bare, buff-coloured clay pipes stretched out across rough hewn and spindly wooden trestles. This is a direct, no nonsense communication.

It is important to Illsley that the works bear the marks of his physical involvement. He wants us to feel the energy of the marks that divide the composition of each painting, left from right, and which he makes with rough chunks of graphite found behind an old iron foundry. He wants us to understand viscerally the distinctive character of paint applied with his home-made brushes and to be well aware of the multiple layers of paint (sometimes mixed with Cornish river mud) under the final heavy veil of grey. On the one hand the paintings speak of refusal and on the other of something coming into being. They are concerned with ideas of duration and of a perpetually shifting impermanence, rather than absolute attainment.

Tessa Peters

Biographical notes

Born 1937, Bryan Illsley's creative practice includes painting, sculpture and jewellery making. Before studying at Kingston School of Art, he served an apprenticeship to a monumental stonemason. Moving to Cornwall in 1963 he initially worked as a packer at the Leach Pottery, St Ives, before joining the studio of Breon O'Casey, eventually becoming a partner. He returned to live and work in London in 1986.

His work has been widely exhibited with some notable solo exhibitions being *Bryan Illsley: Work in Wood, Metal & Paint* (1984), at the Crafts Council Gallery, London and *Uncertain Joys* (2005) at Barrett Marsden Gallery, London. His public commissions include the temporary work *Raised Ash Line* for the Chiltern Sculpture Trail and public collections which hold examples of his work include the Contemporary Art Society, London; Kettles Yard, Cambridge; and Plymouth City Art Gallery.

For more information, images, or to arrange an interview with the artist contact Tatjana Marsden or Alida Sayer
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