



**NICHOLAS RENA
MATTHEW SMITH**

PROVING GROUND

5 May - 19 June 2010

Nicholas Rena shows a series of monumental and breathtakingly beautiful vessels. He is interested in the ritual traditions associated with such objects: baptism, anointment, coronations, the blessing of the crowd. By using the archetypal forms of the jug and bowl he alludes to ideas of giving and receiving and aims to 're-invest the things we take for granted with the kind of power and sustenance we might gain from a religious experience'.

Rigorous and uncompromising, he chooses to work with a limited number of rules to bring each pairing of jug and bowl into harmonic relationship; the inside colour of one becomes the outside colour of its counterpart; the essentially opposing formal characteristics of the circular, tapering bowls and the gently rounded square shapes of the jugs are closely related at the rim. Each form displays his concern for perfection in the absolute precision of their making and in their meticulously smooth and sensuously coloured surfaces. The works are composed, calm and authoritative.

Matthew Smith's abstract paintings include mysterious symbols, the frenetic graffiti of past or future, whose meaning has been lost. They are gestural, animated and irrational, containing a level of fury that is in sharp contrast to the powerful stillness of Rena's idealised forms.

Tessa Peters

Biographical notes

Nicholas Rena has an MA in Architecture from Cambridge University (1985) and an MA in Ceramics from the Royal College of Art, London (1995). He has exhibited internationally, with his most recent solo show held at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (2009). He was shortlisted for the Jerwood Prize for the Applied Arts in 2001. His work can be found in many private and public collections including those of the British Council, Crafts Council, the Victoria & Albert Museum and Canary Wharf Limited.

Matthew Smith studied at Chelsea School of Art (1982 - 85). In 2009 he exhibited at the Barbican Arts Trust Exhibition and the Ludlow Summer Exhibition. His work is represented in public, corporate and private collections across the UK, including The Howard Hotel, London and Churchill College, Cambridge.

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