

PRESS RELEASE

'Abstract Possible:
The Birmingham Beat'

Eastside Projects
6 October to
1 December 2012

José León Cerrillo
Zachary Formwalt
Goldin+Senneby
Wade Guyton
Yelena Popova
Alejandra Salinas
and Aeron Bergman

Curated by Maria Lind
Amended by
Eastside Projects

Preview
Saturday 6 October, 6–8pm
Curator's talk, 4–6pm

Goldin+Senneby
offsite screenings
15 & 16 November, 5–6pm
Booking essential

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Free entry
Open Wednesday to
Saturday 12–5pm

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Why abstraction today? It has been argued that since the invention of abstraction in the early twentieth century it never went away. While no prominent neo-abstract movement has been heralded since the 1960s, abstraction has remained present but 'out of sight'. Having thus been obscured, abstraction can easily appear as an obsolete general phenomenon and redundant artistic tool. However, there has been a palpable interest in abstraction growing since the late 1990s, particularly among younger artists and other cultural producers who both reinterpret the legacy of formal abstraction and shape performative, social versions of abstraction with regard to its meaning — to withdraw.

'Abstract Possible: The Birmingham Beat' is the latest iteration in a research project exploring notions of abstraction, taking contemporary art as its starting point. The art works in 'Abstract Possible: The Birmingham Beat' involve and complicate the three strands of abstraction: formal abstraction, economic abstraction and social abstraction, with an emphasis on economic abstraction. This is the first main gallery exhibition at Eastside Projects to be curated by an external curator. Stockholm based Maria Lind has invited an array of international artists to exhibit as part of 'The Birmingham Beat'.

New York based Wade Guyton's 'Untitled' is a remake of the floor in the artist's former studio. Cheap plywood is painted glossy black, creating a large sculpture, or pedestal, as the very support of all work in the gallery. Mexico City based Jose Leon Cerrillo's large scale silk-screened folding screen 'Hotel Eden Revisited' sits on Guyton's floor, re-contextualising a vocabulary developed over several exhibitions with screens, paper curtains, two-way mirrors, and a reduced geometry. Stockholm based Goldin Senneby's 'Headless at Regus' is one element of an ongoing multi-format project, 'Headless' (2007–), which uses the company Headless Ltd and Bataille's ideas around the act of withdrawal as points of departure to stage an enquiry into the undisclosable. This work is staged as a closed screening of the documentary 'Looking for Headless' in an 'offshore' Regus meeting room in Birmingham. Alejandra Salinas and Aeron Bergman, an artist duo based in Oslo and Detroit dealing with currency, value and exchange, present their video 'Abstract Your Shit Is'. Amsterdam based Zachary Formwalt's book, 'Reading the Economist', takes texts and images from Karl Marx's notebooks, The Economist and the American Daily Graphic to re-link and re-write historical connections and stories from this period allowing for a reconsideration of the current economic crisis.

Eastside Projects proposed Nottingham based artist Yelena Popova as part of 'Abstract Possible'. For her solo show in the second gallery Popova develops a new series of paintings, inspired by old masters portraiture and the notion of the Invisible Man (H. G. Wells and Ralph Ellison).

'Abstract Possible: The Birmingham Beat' suggests that we pay attention to and reconsider certain crucial aspects of the phenomenon of abstraction as it pertains to its intriguing resurgence in contemporary art. Since 2010 'Abstract Possible' has developed at Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; Museo Tamayo, Mexico City; The White Space, Zurich; and Tensta Konsthall, Bukowskis auction house and the Centre for Fashion Studies, University of Stockholm. A further iteration is planned at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart in Stuttgart. www.abstractpossible.org

Maria Lind is one of the preeminent curators in the world today. She was the recipient of the Menil's Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement, 2009, and is Director of Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm.