

Kunstraum

Late Nights & Early Mornings

with Edward Clydesdale Thomson and Florian & Michael Quistrebort

The work of Rotterdam-based artist **Edward Clydesdale Thomson** is concerned with the places and objects on the margins of outside and inside, of wild and tamed landscapes. His sculptural works may resemble gates, fences, or topiary frames for taming decorative trees. In 'The Distracted Gardener' (2013) the common washing line is claimed as just such a site of transition, marking a place where sanitised domestic life is brought into contact with the natural world. Here the line is a rope tied from decorative fabrics designed for Finnish design company Marimekko. The fabrics also perform a transition from exterior/interior: in print the wild landscape is domesticated and comes to represent a certain lifestyle choice.

The steel props of 'The Distracted Gardener' use a spatial language of intersecting soft curves and sharp lines which explicitly references the topiary garden designed by the Scottish architect Robert Lorimer in 1897. For Thomson, Lorimer's topiary represents the enduring capacity of a garden, at the end of the 19th Century, to be at the avant-garde of contemporary style.

Thomson's interest in landscape is by no means tame; in his book *As if an entrance is over there* – he paraphrases Ann Bermingham to describe landscape as 'an active battlefield where ideologies are trained, tested, framed and destroyed'. Perhaps by embodying this principle in his work Thomson proposes that contemporary art can be understood in the same terms – as signifying the capacity of individuals to interfere with the world around them.

Florian & Michael Quistrebort's works embody a tension between painting's rough physically and a more cerebral approach to image making. Produced with diverse materials such as acrylic, oil paint, pigment or bleach, their surfaces are often sculpted from swathes of gesso, or produced through sanding or scraping back. Through these physical structures the Quistreborts set up the work's surface as the site of an investigation into the mystical or symbolic power of painting.

Throughout their practice the painting's surface qualities are the conceptual pivot around which the work operates. By building up and cutting back, or allowing deeper layers to shine through, the Quistreborts produce surfaces which record the painting's past states. The painting surfaces become carriers of information with patterns scored into the surface, or bleached away in a process of deletion, as though the symmetry is a cypher of secret knowledge.

For *Late Nights & Early Mornings* the Quistreborts depart from a graphical composition. The weighty physicality of modelling paste and paint here utterly overcomes rational composition. Emerging through this rough painterly surface are tiny points of light, emitting from LEDs hidden beneath the paint. The work operates on two conceptual planes which slide across one another: the visceral surface quality draws the work off in a direction of randomness, while the elements of light pull back it back into sharp focus. Here visual symmetry is replaced by a conceptual symmetry in which the distinction between matter and light are held in balance.

Late Nights & Early Mornings is Kunstraum's summer program, a back-to-back relay race of five exhibitions running through till September. With each new opening one artist will swap places with the next. The exhibitions have included: Willem Besselink (21 June – 11 July); Willem Besselink and Jacob Dahlgren (12 – 27 July); Jacob Dahlgren and Edward Clydesdale Thomson (1 – 22 August); and the current exhibition with Edward Clydesdale Thomson and Florian & Michael Quistrebart (23 August– 19 September). The program will conclude with an event program at the end of September. *Late Nights & Early Mornings* aims to discover new relationships between artists working in different localities, at the same time it explores the idea of the exhibition space as a site of constant activity.

About Kunstraum:

Kunstraum is a London-based project space with a focus on solo exhibitions of artists based outside of the UK in London's neighbouring European cities. Kunstraum, literally meaning 'art room' in German, seeks to form new relationships with the interconnected art scenes of Europe and the rest of the UK.