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Derek Hill: Flaw

Davy Smith

Myles Meehan Gallery, Darlington Arts Centre, Darlington, UK
28 August – 17 October, 2009

In his current exhibition, "Flaw," at Darlington Arts Centre, Derek Hill's works are produced through a wide range of methods and media. Hill is known for creating monstrous compositions that suggest organic processes.



Flaw, installation view at Myles Meehan Gallery, 2009; Derek Hill, *Untitled II* (from "Flaw" series), 2007-2009. Industrial solvent based paint on canvas.

There is a strong industrial grounding to the work, which glistens and at times imbues the work with darker connotations, reminiscent of aerial photography. The multiple layers are produced with uncompromising patience such as *Untitled V*, Hill displays a more painterly approach, retaining the qualities of aerial photographs.

The autobiographical nature of the series is expressed strongly through his illness, streptococcus septicaemia, which he contracted whilst in the army. It was rare and one which almost claimed my life and has been the displacement of the oil on the paintings' surfaces from these times. This also reminds us of the biological nature of paint and oil, with their own colonies, sharing space, but never intruding into each other's.



Derek Hill, *Untitled V*, (from "Flaw" series), 2007-2009. Industrial solvent based artist;

Derek Hill, *Untitled VI*, (from "Flaw" series), 2007-2009. Industrial solvent based artist.

However, the work also manages to express joyfulness through expressionism and post-painterly abstraction; the processes use industrial Morris Louis or Willem De Kooning.

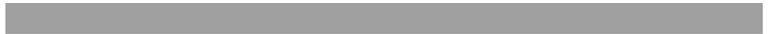


Derek Hill, *Untitled VIII*, (from "Flaw" series), 2007-2009. Industrial solvent based the artist;

Derek Hill, *Untitled III* (from "Flaw" series), 2007-2009. Industrial solvent based artist.

Some of the paintings are worked over with abstract shapes and surrealistic movement to the top layers. The effect is startling, with layers of oil, paint and solvent. The exhibition is a pleasure to encounter a chosen medium that can only have been gathered from a sustained

The exhibition space, split into two connecting rooms, houses Hill's work which takes on a different character, radiating a joyful, warm sense of restlessness. However, time must be spent viewing each work in its own production, requiring the spectator to consider layers upon layers of conflict; an *uncanny* pleasure to view.



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