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HUFF
POST ENTERTAINMENT
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Crafts and Fine Arts at Mayfair

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When there is an obsession in labelling and differentiating among artists, media and Crafts and Fine Arts, it is very liberating to find a space that combines both without such limitations and complete freedom. **Belmacz** is a space in Mayfair that shows jewellery alongside video art, conceptual artworks with antique coins; they even have a swing! His latest exhibition *Dumb Rocks* intends to set out a discussion between the works, centred around a phenomenological inquiry into the essence of Art. What is the relation between the objectivity of an Artwork - that is, its material being as an object, and its nature as an artwork. To what extent is the material objectivity of the work essential or incidental to the work, and how does this form carry the works concept or lack thereof? An exhibition of diverse new works by Tim Berresheim, Jess Flood-Paddock, Camilla Low, Oliver Osborne, Travess Smalley, Oliver Sutherland, including pieces by David Nash and Ettore Sottsass.



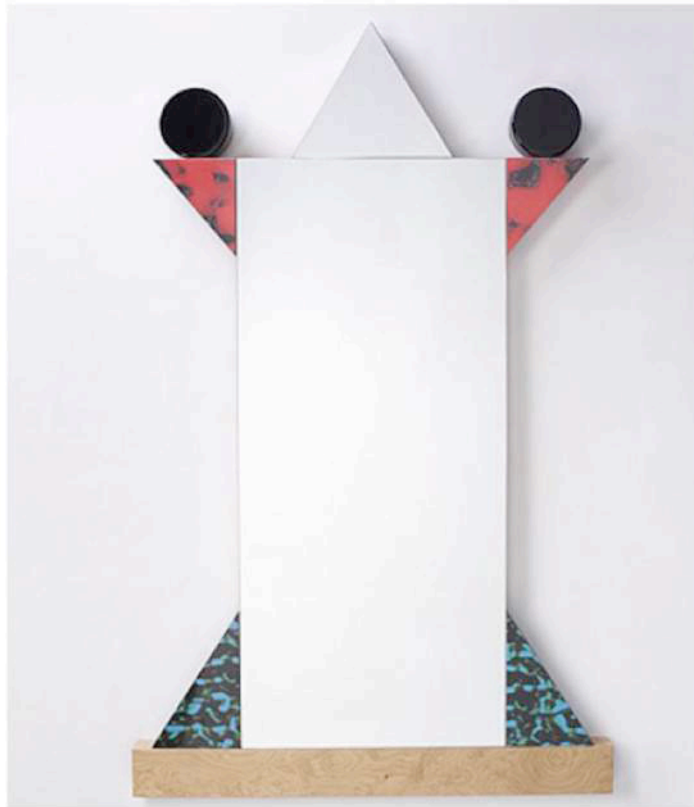
Spring Rain by Camilla Low

Julia Muggenburg, the gallery director, noted on the idea of mixing Fine Arts and Crafts in the same space:

"It was a natural conclusion. My sensibility for jewellery has always been informed by fine art. I use gem stones for their colours as if they were pigment. The Belmacz jewels are displayed in a kinetic bespoke display in the centre of the gallery with all the art around it. In order to take in the gems you have to come up close as the jewels are placed in an understated fashion. I treat the Belmacz space as a diorama. There is a first glance as you are approaching and then once inside you get drawn into a vortex"

Muggenburg also explained that the theme of the exhibition will inform what jewels are in the show. It is intriguing how members of the public respond to such unusual setting, Muggenburg comments:

"The audience is always delighted and intrigued. The idea of course is to inspire and enlighten those who enter."



Diva Mirror by Ettore Sottsass

I asked Ben Newton, the curator, where the idea of *Dumb Rock* came from, he says:

I asked Ben Newton, the curator, where the idea of *Dumb Rock* came from, he says:

"The start point for me came from thinking about the space, and more predominantly it's day to day use. It's primary function being that of a business that deals in jewellery, which as we know in essence are rocks, stones etc. So I wanted the show to harmonise with that function, to become one with it as it were. I'm interested in that grey area between the individual 'Arts'....what Adorno might term a 'blurring' or 'fraying' of the clean divisions that high Modernist thinkers such as Greenberg set out to affirm. So it made sense for me to include works that have function (Ettore Sottsass, Camilla Low) or allude to function, and help act as a kind of bridge as it were between the works viewed as Art and the design function of the space. But at the same time, as much as this Subject-Object relationship is enforced by this mode of Aesthetic reflection, I'm also interested in the potential of thinking beyond this..into a realm of object oriented Aesthetics - Speculative Realism if you were - The contingency of autonomous materials beyond the determination of the Artists production or conceptual intentions. Now this is obviously an area of discourse that one could ruminate on for a lifetime so I'll leave it at that. The title of the show I pulled from a passage written by John Kelsey in his book 'Rich Text's' where he talks about the ancient Menhirs of Corsica. These man made stone figures having lost their original sense of signification, standing alone in the landscape for mute eternity. It seemed to key into everything I was thinking about in and around not only the show but my thoughts on Contemporary Art too and especially it's post-minimal paradigm."

I also wanted to know how Newton selected the artists, he tells me that:

"The Artists in the show I selected not just because I admire their work, but also because I felt in certain cases intrigued by what I have seen of their work and wanted to know more about them and their practice. In any show I curate I always want to push my self a little and set up new conversations with Artists who I might not necessarily know in person up to that point. Some of the choices were born out of conversations I have had over the years with Julia Muggenberg who runs the space - conversations that encompass the whole of our cultural spectrum and not just Contemporary art. I also aimed to cover as broad a range of media as possible...so we have Camilla Low and Jess Flood-Paddock working within the realms of sculpture, Oliver Osborne who as a painter is dealing with the slippage between image and text and questioning paintings position as a teleological progression. Travess Smalley and Tim Berresheim both use - in markedly different ways - the computer or scanner as a tool to blur the lines between painting/photography, the tangible/intangible. Oliver Sutherland makes computer generated films that evoke an eternal sense of looped loneliness, whilst maintaining a technologically self-reflexive air of the now they suggest also the pending spent force of formats. Ettore Sottsass is Ettore Sottsass...he needs no introduction."