

Last week in Paris, Fiona Robinson attended the vernissage of *Accumulation*, a new exhibition at ParisCONCRET.

ParisCONCRET is that rare thing in Paris, a not-for-profit space and a venue showing non-objective, geometric abstract, minimalist and reductive art. The gallery is in Rue des Immeubles Industriels, an imposing street of nineteen identical three-storey buildings constructed originally for industrial use. Many were used as workshops by artisans and the street is now a famous Paris landmark and tourist attraction. With wonderful huge, high doors on the ground floor level and multi-paned windows high up in the door, they are very Parisian and very beautiful.

Inside, the space is small, intimate, with two walls either side of the façade and one, slightly box shaped wall at the back. They are close enough to instigate a conversation between the work exhibited and yet far enough apart that each piece can be viewed individually from a good distance without interruption.

Directors Richard and Anna van der Aa often show three artists together in order to promote just such a dialogue. For *Accumulation* the three artists are *Kate Beck* and *Linda Hutchins* (both American) and *Lynette Smith* who is Australian. All three women are making work that is process driven and labour intensive.

Linda Hutchins explores her ideas through drawing and works develop through repetition and process. In *Scale 2012*, which covers an entire wall, she has stroked the surface with all ten digits wearing silver thimbles which, as she scrapes her fingers and thumbs down in short bursts, leave silver residue on the slightly grainy support. Process driven and private, the public are not invited to observe her working, but there is nevertheless a performative aspect to this work; the sound of scraping and the rhythmic movement of the artist as she goes about her self imposed task. The thimbles are beautiful objects in their own right and when her wall drawing has been obliterated by paint ready for the next show, the damaged thimbles will remain as a memory of the process.

Hutchins' drawing is large, 350 x 460 cm, and involves reaching up and sideways to make the marks, and so retains a sense of her human scale. The apparent randomness is deceptive since her process creates a pattern of triangles which appear to float up and down in the space when viewed from a distance. The marks are pale, almost fading into the matter of the wall, the result of a process that in this piece seems take precedence over the visual aesthetic.

On the opposite wall is **Kate Beck's** *Structure in 2*, a diptych in unequal sized panels of poured oil and graphite on aluminum. The two panels, one half the size of the other, have a gap between them which creates a palpable tension, forcing the eye to consider whether they are pulling apart or towards each other. The

surface is dense, yet as the graphite shrinks and dries tiny cracks appear which seem constantly to change as they absorb and reflect the quality of light that falls on it throughout the day, creating a sense of perpetual slow movement and change.

Beck's process is protracted, with layers interspersed with periods of profound reflection. The piece is deeply meditative, the darkness of the surface, velvety and luxurious; its depth is deceptive since the aluminum panels are wafer thin. Ostensibly two-dimensional on a flat surface, the words of the title hint at the artist's intention. This object stands out from the wall.

The third piece in this exhibition is set on the back wall, which has two wings that create a box shape. A site-specific piece by **Lynette Smith**, *Increase* is constructed of small pieces of synthetic clay, painted and mounted on steel pins which have been driven into the wall. The rows of pins, the heads of which are of two different colours, are mounted in lines, a specific distance apart. But the lines are not straight; they dip and move and break off as they progress down the wall and round the corner of the wall, into the wings of wall on either side. The shadows of the pins, which drip down the wall to a greater or lesser extent, depending on the light, create a sense of flickering movement. They are a record of an action, in this case that of the gallery director who installed the piece. It was a collaboration of trust, the materials sent from Australia and the artist allowing, for the first time ever, someone else to pursue the organic dictates of the materials and the moment.

Increase sets up a different rhythm to the wall drawing by Linda Hutchens but there is an interesting conversation about the aesthetics of site-specific work and authorship going on between these two installations. Standing aloof from the physical properties of the gallery walls Beck's work is nevertheless beautifully proportioned for its given space. Her work is deeply rooted in the visual aesthetic, and the asymmetry of the panels highlight differing interpretations of the notions of beauty and the sublime. Light makes a significant contribution to the status of all three works but the overriding connection here seems to be the element of time. As these works were being made in such physically proactive ways, time elapsed. Accretion of residues of materials, of actions, of repetition of gesture, are all alluded to by the title of the show. *Accumulation*, interrogates the universality and ubiquity of the laying down of layers over time, whether physical, conceptual or emotional, from three different points of view.

Fiona Robinson