

i-donline.com: 'Mark Hagen Dreams On', By Mihael Kowalinski, May 2011

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Mark Hagen Dreams On

Having shown in New York, Lisbon and most recently Paris as part of Hedi Slimane's group show *California Dreamin'* - Myths and Legends of Los Angeles, Mark Hagen is one of the most captivating artists working in the US today.

In his new show at China Art Objects in LA, Hagen continues to explore ideas of time, consumption and unexpected materials through his paintings on burlap which are left exposed in the sunlight to brown and age. The artist's intriguing questions are also explored through photography and 'architectural screen', his sculpture based on the theme of continuity. And so, the journey continues. *Living Loud Issue* cover star Hedi Slimane told i-D Online, "Mark Hagen, with his Californian, abstract, post minimal paintings, is, by far, one of the best artists to come out of the Los Angeles art scene."

i-D Online spoke with the artist about time, the LA scene and *California Dreamin'* with Hedi.

Tell me about the role time plays in your work. Is it as central an idea in this new exhibition? Time is definitely something I think and read about on a regular basis. My intuition tells me that our experience of time is just one among an infinite number of possibilities or, more radically, that our experience of change, succession and time is simply the result of our inability to perceive everything at once. It's the symptom of a deficiency, just like what we perceive with our eyes, the visible spectrum, is but a sliver, one percent or less, of the overall electromagnetic spectrum. These are the kinds of thoughts that are always in the background of my work and many pieces in my show try to create the experience of temporal disorientation through simple methods and means.

What did you learn that was new about yourself while preparing for this show? That unconsciously my work is about sex.

What do you think the art scene in Los Angeles needs now? My first thought is: more art schools, galleries, museums, and collectors. But who knows, maybe fewer art schools, galleries, museums, and collectors might create an unpredictable, unstable environment where greater cultural leaps and experiments might happen.

Tell us about your work in the *California Dreamin'* group show... It was an honour to be included by Hedi Slimane in the exhibition at Almine Rech's Paris gallery and to see my work installed next to John McCracken's, one of my heroes. Hedi is a very prolific, prescient and interesting generator of culture and his uncalculating, but nonetheless studied, enthusiasm for Los Angeles art and artists is totally refreshing. I would be happy to be involved in one of his curatorial projects again. I do have ideas for collaborations with other people, mostly non-artists, but no definitive plans at the moment.

What are the ideas behind the exhibition? Something monumental resulting from the slow, stupid accumulation of the same substance or form over time. The body as an additive structure. An artwork as a record of its progression and the material circumstances of its creation. Objects that attempt to embody geological laws without being illustrative or metaphorical. Objects that are both successive and simultaneous in one way or another. Patterns that imply continuity from one painting to the next. Contained formlessness. The cyclic. The anachronistic. The prehistoric. To name a few!

Mark Hagen at China Art Objects, Los Angeles, runs from 21st May until 25th June.

chinaartobjects.com

Text Michael Kowalinski

