

this is tomorrow



Luke Diiorio, *Sunset Park*, 2015. Installation view, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London

Luke Diiorio: Sunset Park

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery

4 September - 3 October 2015

'Sunset Park' displays New York-based artist Luke Diiorio's subtle, painterly dexterity across the walls of Pippy Houldsworth Gallery with radiant bliss. In the exhibition a shift in Diiorio's practice reveals itself – the use of muted, chocolatey brown and dusted beige palette foregoing the robin's egg blue and light rose that had been previously employed. Alongside this are visual characteristics that now present Diiorio's work compellingly in oscillation between sculpture and painting, drawing also on aspects of social and cultural history.

The exhibition title derives from the area of New York where Diiorio has his studio, as well as being a vehicle for his formal concerns. 'Sunset stands for something fading yet illuminated; the more it disappears, the more desirable it becomes. On the other, Park represents a physical space of form and play'. In 'Untitled (Sunset Park #9)' (2015), waves of beige felt cascade towards the floor. On the left, a brown curve creeps over the side of the compositional frame. Paralleling this, a second curved stripe sees the last thinning streaks of pale blue fade into beige. It's as if Diiorio has had to physically produce and visualise the end of one part of his artistic practice in order to be able to progress.

'The fabrics', says Diiorio in Interview Magazine, 'are sprayed with a gun and compressor, and bleach and different chemicals, so that is the painting, but then [the material] gets sculpted'. It appears that Diiorio is calling upon the reductive radicalism of minimal visual language. The works are the result of 'where can I go from here' once reduced to their fundamentals. The painterly aesthetics and colour palette move beyond two-dimensionality to work in conjunction with the materiality of the fabrics, evoking both physical and visual pleasure.

Folds of fabric flutter down the work like venetian blinds in 'Untitled (Sunset Park #7)' (2015). The predominant section is a warm brown with three descending, arched scratches of beige. The two left-hand marks thin towards the bottom, the right-hand mark thins towards the top. The asymmetrical balance provides a feeling of intimacy. It draws the viewer closer: a teaser inviting them to follow the lines with their own hand, to feel the soft fabric and caress the contours, to break the fourth wall and absorb themselves within the work.

Other references are easily drawn out of the abstract paintings. In 'Untitled (Sunset Park #3)' (2015), the differing spaces between horizontal slits emulate the distinctive surface quality of Lucio Fontana's work. From a brown segment falls a long thin triangle that, as it reaches the bottom of the canvas, continues underneath forming a T-shape. It quickly summons the upside down silhouette of St Michael's Catholic Church in Sunset Park itself. Likewise, 'Untitled (Sunset Park #2)' (2015), again employs lines of various thicknesses. These recall the geometric formalities of road markings. Diiorio's work contains many references, all ambiguous and all to be suggested by the viewer.

'Sunset Park' is a stimulating and rigorous intellectual exercise while remaining soft, warm and visually inviting. The artist's surface qualities, pattern and colour rest as easily on the viewer's eyes as the vividly fantasised sunset.

William Davie