

Alex Morrison
July 4 – August 3, 2013

Blanket / Cologne is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Dusseldorf based artist Alex Morrison.

Morrison's practice is invested in local histories and intersections between architecture and design – their inevitable interdependencies and challenged vernaculars. Attending to social histories, Morrison addresses the late 20th century postmodernist use of 'historicism' and 'appropriation' that fetishized 'old' aesthetics and employed them as a form of 'critical regionalism', fueling the revival of and nostalgia for the folk vernacular in the commercial and domestic spheres. This revival of craft vernacular at the height of the Modern movement acted as a détente, a thawing out of strained relations between architects and artists. Morrison aims to question how despite the advent of the Modern, certain aesthetics are stubbornly persistent, while others are discarded and then - given the right political climate – readily re-absorbed despite the 'historical' status thrown upon them.

Morrison's Traumstrasse, a series of lanterns currently on view at the Museum Abteiberg, may at first appear as a collection of utilitarian design objects but upon further reflection are conceptual statements filled with multiple references, thus intentionally complicating the viewers' experience. This oscillation between design and conceptual art are further revealed in the exhibition at the gallery. Drawing upon personal biography as well as 20th century examples including Push Pin Graphic's illustrations, Charles Moore's 'shingle style' and the handmade revolution in 1960s California Design, Morrison's new works collectively evoke a contemporary fragmentation of monolithic visual codes. He addresses the post-modernist inclination towards the 'retro' where notions of 'old' and 'new' operate in the same conceptual and chronological space, where the 'old' is often presented as an example of an authentic and humanist alternative, as a persistent stumbling block. In thinking about the softening of modernist styles through both postmodernism and folk aesthetics, Morrison's works reveal how particular genres are borrowed in order to lend a sense of authority, permanence or perceived refinement to the otherwise disposable character of our built environment.

Alex Morrison (b. 1972, UK) lives and works in Dusseldorf. His work is currently on view at *An Unsuspecting Dream Park*, a group exhibition at Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach, Germany. Morrison was recently a subject of solo exhibitions at Artspeak, Vancouver; *Every Letter in the Alphabet*, CSA Space, Vancouver; Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver and Büro Friedrich, Berlin. His work was included in *Melanchotopia* at the Witte de With, Rotterdam; the 17th Sydney Biennial; *It Is What It Is*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; *Following a Line*, Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver; *Cubes, Blocks and Other Spaces*, Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal; *Getting Even*, Kunstverein Hannover; *Exponential Future*, Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, Vancouver. Sternberg Press published a monograph on his work in 2005.