
HOUSE OF ALBA

fried contemporary is proud to present an installation by ricky burnett

HOUSE OF ALBA | RICKY BURNETT

15 september - 29 october 2016

For the last few years I have been predicating my very abstract and highly textured paintings on a close observation of Goya. I start painting with Goya very much in mind but then end up somewhere else entirely. I am not making any particular comment on Goya nor am I 'reworking Goya', ironically or otherwise, I am, however, responding to undercurrents and compositional energies in his work, both the prints and the paintings.

The Fried gallery installation, which I've called, The House of Alba, consists of 6 largish dark (some might say black) paintings, 5 predominantly red paintings and 2 very whitish paintings. The dark paintings have their origins in Goya's etchings, The Disparates, and his later murals from the House of the Deaf Man, often referred to as his black paintings. The whitish paintings are called The Silvery Duchess 1 and 2 and the red paintings simply called Alba and numbered sequentially.

Goya's portrait of the Duchess of Alba of 1794, with her long silvery dress, her emphatic black hair and the deep red sash and bow, has for many years been one of my favourite paintings. So the exhibition is a nod of acknowledgement to this painting. The paintings and their titles and the installation are an expression of appreciation and affection, whatever else they maybe, will, I hope, be discovered.

By way of small disclosure I have some thoughts to declare:

I am much less interested in what paintings mean or what they might be said to say than how they feel, that is what their 'presence' is.

I am also interested in literature, music and paintings that reveal or disclose slowly and can than therefore stand up to multiple encounters, visits and revisits.

Presence and slow release are often

attributes of the history of the making of the work - how dense with making the work is, how dense with its own history.

As philosopher Alva Noe has said, "Every work of art is a thought experiment."

RICKY BURNETT

Ricky Burnett was born in Birmingham, England, in 1949, and he moved to South Africa at the age of six. He attended Wits University, where he studied Medicine before switching to a BA degree in the Humanities. It was after discovering the work of Cezanne that he decided to become an artist: he was struck by the merging of thought and feeling in Cezanne's work, the capacity to order experience while remaining emotionally connected to the world.

In 1972, he met Bill Ainslie and within a year he was making art objects. Almost simultaneously, he started to teach – and found an aptitude and passion for teaching that remains with him today. His remarkable talent for curating also emerged soon afterwards: he curated two exhibitions for the Foundation, one at Gallery 101 and the second at the Market Theatre Gallery. These were followed by two solo exhibitions of his own work at the Market Theatre Gallery and the Enthoven Gallery. Gail Behrmann described the metal sculptures as 'extraordinary abstract drawings in space that caught the eye of Anthony Caro'.

For several years, Burnett would remain associated with the Art Foundation and write reviews for the Rand Daily Mail. A major turn occurred when he started the BMW Tributaries project, which involved collecting artworks throughout southern Africa. Andrew Vester wrote:

'Ricky Burnett has put together the most exciting collection of South African art ever seen. The show is unique for it brings together works from so many different sources ... His journey took him to art schools and teaching studios ... to community centre workshops, to museums, to opulent collections, grass woven beehive huts, city centres, barren settlements, and some very pretty villages.'

Following the success of Tributaries, Burnett moved to London in 1985. There he worked on what would eventually become the famous Brenthurst Collection, now on permanent loan at the Johannesburg Art Gallery.

In 1989, Burnett returned to South Africa to curate a ground-breaking exhibition of Jackson Hlungwane's work. The following year, Burnett and

Mary Slack set up Newtown Galleries. This gallery was the first in the country to exhibit new work from the rest of continental Africa. Burnett curated around thirty exhibitions during this period.

Ricky Burnett moved to the United States in 2001, near Seattle, where he continued to teach and make art before returning to South Africa in 2007. He soon re-established himself as a teacher and curator – and curated the celebrated 'Horse' at the Everard Read (Johannesburg) and CIRCA. A series of ground-breaking exhibitions also followed: 'Margins' (Everard Read Johannesburg, 2008), 'Resurrection Cycles & On Skin' (smac, 2009), 'Damascus Gate' (Gallery 2, 2014), 'Troubled with Goya' (Everard Read Johannesburg, 2015) and 'Goya Adaptations' (Everard Read, Johannesburg, 2016).

In 2016, Palimpsest Press published a book about Ricky Burnett's recent work. Titled *Troubled with Goya*, it features photographs by Liz Whitter and contains Ricky Burnett in conversation with Tracey Hawthorne.

RICKY BURNETT



ALBA 3
Oil on canvas
500 x 750 mm
2016

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ALBA 4
Oil on canvas
500 x 750 mm
2016

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ALBA 5
Oil on canvas
500 x 750 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



ALBA 7
Oil on canvas
190 x 250 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



ALBA 8
Oil on canvas
190 x 250 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



DS 19
Oil on canvas
1076 x 1400 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



DS 20
Oil on canvas
1076 x 1400 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



HDM 6
Oil on canvas
1500 x 850 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



HDM 4
Oil on canvas
650 x 1700 mm
2016

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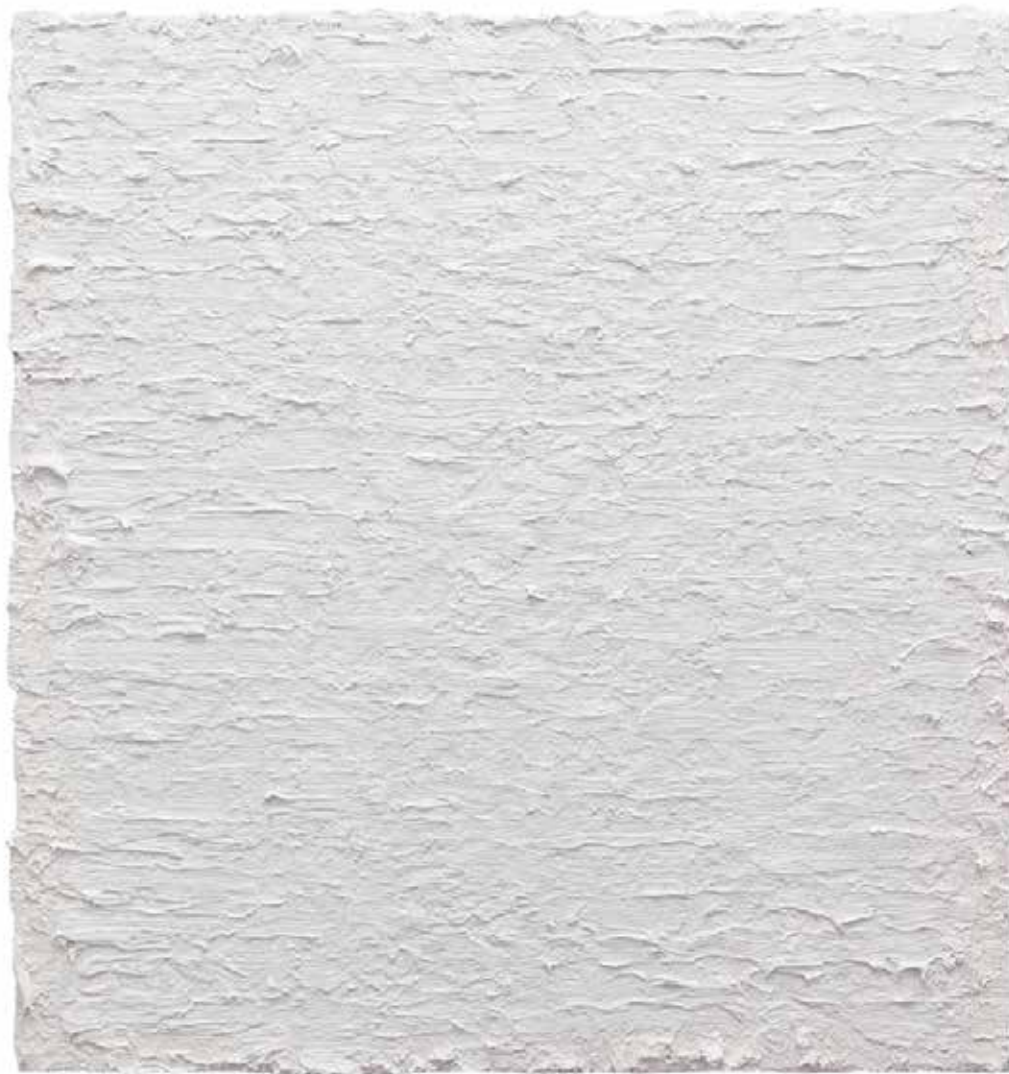
HDM 2
Oil on canvas
1500 x 850 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



HDM 3
Oil on canvas
650 x 1700 mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



Silver Duchess I
Oil on canvas
880 x 830mm
2016

RICKY BURNETT



Silver Duchess II
Oil on canvas
880 x 830mm
2016

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c o n t e m p o r a r y

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