

GILES ROUND / MANDLA REUTER

What differentiates most clearly an object from a sculpture is clarity of function. The works in this exhibition blur this distinction. Giles Round's piece *Light Sculpture, TAKT* (2010) – a long cable going up and down from floor to ceiling sketching the word 'takt' – first appears as an autonomous entity. It looks as solid as steel, a strong and independent gesture forcing viewers to physically renegotiate the space. Yet the lit light bulb hanging at the end of this sculptural statement reminds us of its (real or fictional) previous incarnation as a domestic lamp, and the loop of loose wire by the plug suggests that the bulb's height can be modulated as it could with the Victorian Rise & Fall lamp that inspired Giles' series of work. This stretching into space remains, of course, in a state of potential. Having outgrown itself to trace a fragment of language, the lamp has lost the flexibility that once characterised it as a domestic appliance.

German designer Jan Tschichold used the word 'takt' – meaning time and rhythm in a musical sense – in relation to typography, a recurring interest of Giles'. Since coming across British typographer Eric Gill's dictum 'Letters are things, not pictures of things', the artist has investigated the possibilities offered by the alphabet not as a communicative tool but as a modular space, a pool of abstract signs open to reconfiguration. Giles' light pieces have often included letters, small sequences of the alphabet unreadable once installed. Here the letters are more decipherable than ever before, but their allusion to graphic design paradoxically restates their materiality – their thing-ness.

Mandla Reuter's *Light and Magic* (2010) is a pair of common-or-garden 3D glasses, like the ones given out in cinemas to watch 3D movies. Removed from their context though, they lose all functionality – looking through *Light and Magic* won't change the Peles' Turkish Salon – but it's precisely their newly-found uselessness that turns them into a critique of cinema's obsession with looking 'more real', and the confusion this can create. Like drugs and pornography, entertainment culture functions on a logic of 'always more'. Reuter's glasses are an invitation to consider the possibility of looking for less. His *Pair of Warm Slippers* (2010) takes a more oblique approach to the notion of purpose. The two electric mules are 'on', cosy for no one to enjoy. This little piece of indulgent electric equipment comes to stand for a now-departed human being. It infuses the space with a presence, a simulacra of human warmth. Like the 3D glasses outside a cinema, the empty electric slippers are re-activated by their non-functionality.

Coline Milliard

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