

Exhibition Guide

Armando Andrade Tudela
4 February – 29 March 2009
Second Floor Galleries

Born in Lima, Peru, Armando Andrade Tudela has spent the last decade living and working in the Netherlands, England, France and is currently living in Berlin. This itinerant experience has provoked an interest in meaning and value, transmitted by visual codes and translated across cultures. He dissects everyday objects and materials, architecture and works of art, focusing on Modernism and Minimalism – a particularly rigorous form of modern art eradicating any reference to narration or expression – and the differences between their manifestations in the West and his native Latin America.

Andrade Tudela's new series of films *Four Descriptions of Maneval's Six Shell Bubble House* reflects upon a modular construction designed by French architect Jean Pierre Maneval in 1963. This was a living unit made of six synthetic shells that could be stacked inside one another, easily transportable, making possible a more free and exploratory way of life inspired by spirit of the times. Production started in the late 1960s, but quickly ceased due to the Bubble's experimental nature and the complex engineering involved. Today only a handful remain. Andrade Tudela's films, uncut and unedited descriptions of the interior and exterior of one of these few surviving Bubble Houses capture its decaying shell under a range of light and weather conditions. They reveal a constantly changing appearance, suggesting the fragility of Maneval's achievement.

The films are projected onto a screen that corresponds to the modernist exhibition style that often involved prefabricated panels, thus enabling more flexible space organisation – not unlike Maneval's Bubble House. The screen is made from unpainted industrial pegboard, creating a raw, semi-transparent structure intended to assimilate the films with the gallery architecture and the other exhibited works. It is in fact part of *8 Panels*, the remaining seven panels of which are seen elsewhere as a pile, resembling a minimalist sculpture. As with Maneval's Six Shell Bubble House, which can be dismantled, stacked and transported, *8 Panels* suggests an open

dialogue between the active and the inactive, where elements of exhibition design are themselves exhibited as a work of art.

In the same room as the films we encounter Andrade Tudela's *Untitled (Glass and Coverlet)*. A large glass panel leans against the wall, propping up an insulating blanket. The latter is made of Mylar, a by-product of the super-insulating materials developed for the NASA/Apollo Space missions in the early fifties, used as a coating for the first communications satellite that orbited earth in 1960, reflecting telephone, radio and television signals. Here though, the highly reflective qualities of the silver and gold coverlet are distorted by the glass, which captures the reflections of the surrounding space and passers-by. With this work, Andrade Tudela seems to suggest that our perceptual experience is always divided between layers of reflection and that our sense of space is never fixed to one point but continually shifting.

In this vein three new works, *Untitled (Rattan #1)*, *(Rattan #2)* and *(Rattan #3)*, involve surfaces of rattan woven across double layer metal frames. Not only do the resulting grids resist our focus, but also the inner dimensions change as we move from one to the other. The basic form of these works has been loosely adopted from minimalist work, although the visual effects they give rise to recall hallucinatory experiences associated with counter-cultural movements of the sixties. Our inability to hold these forms steadily before our eyes suggests the impossibility of fixing any aesthetic proposition.