



"Housing 7," 2012
Richard Deacon
MARBLING ON FOLDED STPI HANDMADE PAPER,
CONSTRUCTED WITH MAGNET BUTTON
43¼" x 22¼" x 16½"
PHOTO: JEFF MCLANE
COURTESY: LA LOUVER, VENICE, CA

LOS ANGELES
Richard Deacon: "Beware of the Dog"
at LA Louver

British artist Richard Deacon, best known for his large-scale wood and metal sculptures, employs a more malleable medium—paper—in "Beware of the Dog," his current body of work, as seen at LA Louver gallery. Created while in residence in Singapore, the works explore the sculptural aspects of handmade paper. Deacon presents four discreet, although related, bodies of work that expand on the idea of the fold in myriad ways. Working with wet paper, Deacon experimented with the technique of marbling as well as with ways to sculpt the paper's form. These self-contained works respond to an assortment of real-world visual stimuli in addition to making art historical allusions. In particular, Deacon refers to Konrad Witz, a German-born painter from the 1400s, whose paintings depict figures wearing intricately folded robes. In wall reliefs named after Witz, Deacon takes large sheets of handmade paper, which he then compresses through a series of folds. The resulting multi-dimensional works protrude from the wall exhibiting characteristics of painting and sculpture simultaneously.

In the *Housing* pieces, Deacon creates hybrid forms that explore inside/outside dichotomies. Visually dense but structurally light they are made by folding multiple pieces of handmade marbled paper into polygonal shapes that are held together by magnets. *Housing 7* is a human-scaled sculpture consisting of seven

(three- to six-sided) polygons. Both the inside and outside surfaces are covered with swirls, speckles and bright swashes of color. A wooden base rings the perimeter of the sculptures, anchoring the paper enclosures to the floor and securing them in place. Seen en masse, they reference the high-rise apartment buildings that populate Singapore's urban landscape.

The prints that line the gallery's walls complement the floor pieces and engage in dialogue with them as they both explore surface density. Inspired by the zigzag lines he observed on hazard tape, Deacon personalized these generic markings, creating strips of cross-hatched patterns. The screen prints are then covered with his patterned strips, some black and white (*Sleeping Beauty*), others in primary colors that are embedded in handmade paper (*Dog Days*).

Deacon is interested in the formal qualities of his materials and is not afraid of experimentation and pushing the boundaries of what those materials can do, be they metal, wood, clay or paper. He aspires towards making complex and beautiful works, and in this instance by marbling, folding and manipulating handmade paper he creates sophisticated forms: some that defy gravity becoming irregular reliefs and others that appear as architectural anomalies.

—JODY ZELLEN