

REVIEW: "Piss Yellow/Stars and Bars" solo exhibition by Tom Holmes at Bureau, New York.



Tom Holmes, Piss Yellow / Stars and Bars, 2013. Installation view. "Untitled Plot" (front). "Untitled Arrangement" (back). Courtesy of the gallery.

Can the face of death peer its way through the cracks of a chip bag? Tom Holmes investigates similar questions in his second solo show, "Piss Yellow/ Stars and Bars," at Bureau, New York,

Holmes' work has taken on a funerary narrative; split into categories like "Graves," "Shrouds," "Arrangements" and "Plots." "Untitled Plot," a rectangular formation of spray-painted cinder blocks, creates a vapid architectural space. The arrangement is so minimal that absence becomes highlighted – vacancy becoming the phantasmagoric entity of the work. This "presence of absence" is the thick fog that both distorts and defines the work. Its large pieces, listed as, "Untitled Arrangement," extract the aesthetic formation of the Cheeto's Logo. However the letters are not fully defined, and contain material manipulations with paint, and incisions on their reflective material.

Although we are reminded of a Cheeto's logo, that [cheesey leopard \(http://www.sogoodblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/chester-cheetah.jpg\)](http://www.sogoodblog.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/chester-cheetah.jpg) is a ghostly memory long departed. Holmes' product is a shell, simplified into a painterly composition of shapes and patterns.

By isolating his referential subject matter into shapes, colors and patterns, Holmes produces a space that questions the production and fulfillment of his funerary objects. Empty decorations wait for something to fill their sentimental void, creating an oscillating experience: detaching the viewer from pop-culture and historical signifiers, while allowing the symbol's ethos to remain.

When staring at the reflective surface of Holmes' Cheetos inspired works, the emptiness of architectural intervention, or ghost of historical past, begs the question: maybe it's not the emptiness or vacancy of the design that matters, but its reflection of our own cultural production? Do we inhabit constructions and compositions in space, waiting for meaning to be assigned?

In "Piss Yellow/Stars and Bars," the viewer stands in the midst of a funeral, mourning the loss of our reliance upon objects and symbols.