

# KIMMERICH

Steven Claydon  
*Twickenham Garden*  
May 5 – July 9, 2011

Kimmerich is pleased to announce its third solo exhibition with Steven Claydon, *Twickenham Garden*—its first with the artist in New York.

Upon entering, the viewer encounters a large ceramic vase that is glazed in such a way that it likens itself more to bronze than clay. It is displayed within two cubic fields, the contours of which are outlined by two steel rod structures. Further within the space a metal screen holds a number of panels, one of which is a meticulous rendering of a Tree Shrew—one of the oldest known mammals—in oil paint. Jutting from the wall adjacent is a panel of another rendering, this one of an ancient language written on the surface of clay. Both paintings have been rendered from photographs, and like the ceramic, these paintings too travel through these layers of perceptions—from the analogue to the digital and then through the laborious process of oil painting to bring it once back into cognizance.

The exhibition takes its title from the poem by John Donne (1572-1631), in which the protagonist contemplates a spider who has the capability to “...transubstantiate all, And can convert manna to gall...”. Within this exhibition we see material convert itself into form—wood as tin can, aluminium is cast into the common brick. If Claydon’s infidelity with materials was not transparent, it would be almost as if he were concerned with deception alone. However, more than a simple illusion, Claydon is interested not in making materials look more or less like their proper consistencies but in the fact that there is an inherent intellectual faculty of materials to begin with.

Claydon’s sculptures suggest that perhaps it isn’t logic or an empirical process that leads us to identifying materials, but instead mere notion. Perceptions of finish, surface and texture lead to holistic understandings of integrity, substance, existence and finally to recognition.

Claydon describes this as “the passage through which materials journey from earthly substrate to cultural signifier”. Perhaps Claydon alludes ceramic to be cast metal, but first dust and water must be considered to be ceramic—Claydon is participating in a existing history of recognition. The confederacy of the plastic and illusory calls upon material to behave as a prop within the dramatic suspension of disbelief.

Material is a vessel for the deployment of language via the politics of seduction. Material itself is a cultural heirloom, and artifacts are their own autonomous language that allow the present to communicate with its past.

British artist Steven Claydon was born in London in 1969.

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