

Drawing Practice

Luke Painter's drawing practice explores the relationships between historical and contemporary design and art movements by creating formal, narrative and tangential connections between them. He is interested in the origins of particular historical styles and the ways they are co-opted and adapted in cyclical trends and by ideological movements.

In the work titled *Drapes (From Deco to Memphis Milano)* Painter bring together five different textile patterns from the 20th century. The first four show the chronological period of Art Deco in the 1920's with its signature floral patterns to the geometric abstraction of the late Art Deco style in the 1940's. The last textile skips ahead in time to depict the popular and colourful Memphis Milano patterns of the 1980's. The stylistic relationships between these textiles become evident even though 40 years of art and design practice separates them.

The Teasers and the Tormentors at Centre Clark in Montreal

This work references and continuously transforms set designs from 20th century theatre, film productions and illusion shows through the use of virtual 3D animation tools. The title, *The Teasers and the Tormentors*, refers to the vertical and horizontal borders on a theatre stage that are adjustable and change the size and shape of the stage viewer window. The animation depicts a stage where a number of sets are represented including Josef Svoboda's scenography designs for *Romeo and Juliet*, Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*, Dario Argento's *Suspiria* and the illusion based technique titled Pepper's Ghost (developed by John Henry Pepper) used in amusement parks and theatres. These sets are constructed and transformed, only to be deconstructed and replaced by other sets from the 20th century. The work travels across different time periods, exploring the tensions between competing art movements and making tangential, formal and narrative connections between images. Through the use of mirrors in the 3D animation, the viewer's perspective shows the action outside of the camera frame which becomes a reflexive technique that allows the viewer a sense of awareness of the space that is beyond the set.

Modern Wand at Cambridge Galleries.

In the work titled *Modern Wand*, Painter has created a number of sculptures that are amalgams and translations of historical design objects and furniture.

The series of sculptures are fabricated in glass and wood through traditional and laser cut techniques and rest on a series of interconnecting and raised carpeted platforms. Influenced by designers like Arthur Mackmurdo and Emile Galle, these works convey organic, ornamental and anthropomorphic sensibilities with the appearance of holding the body and also physically suggesting the body at the same time. The work offers a space for the viewer to imagine the often-contrasting themes of functionality and fantasy that played out in the 20th century in relation to art and design practices. The objects appear to be adrift without a specific stylistic timeframe and with uncertain and open intentions.

The title of the exhibition is taken from a book published in 1928 by the German designer Karl Leuth titled *Moderne Wand und Decken-Dekoration* ("Modern Wall and Ceiling Decoration"). It details wall and ceiling designs that were influenced by competing styles in the late 19th and 20th centuries. These included the floral motifs of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the ornamental nature of Art Deco and the geometric minimalism of the forthcoming Modernist style. Painter is specifically interested in pairing the words "Modern" and "Wand". The contemporary art context for the term *modern* is used to designate the period before contemporary and marks a difference in philosophical approach to art making. In design, the word *modern* is mostly associated and marketed as a product that is current, and often has a restrained and tasteful formalism. In contrast to *modern*, the word *wand* is associated with a magical instrument in the fantasy genre. It is a fictional, often gnarled piece of wood that is organic in appearance and has the potential to alter reality. For Painter, the connection to

history resides with the cast bases of Tiffany lamps resembling tree stumps and the natural design elements of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The pairing of the words *Modern* and *Wand* is purposeful in creating tension in the areas of taste and aesthetics in 20th century furniture, art and design.