



**BILLY GRUNER
CONCRETE PAINTING
49 EDITIONS**

**UND JETZT
8.12-16.12.2007**

**IS=IEMKE VAN DIJK
& GUIDO WINKLER
DRIE OCTOBERSTRAAT 16A
2313 ZP LEIDEN NL**

**LE PETIT PORT
UNTIL 15.1.2008
HERENSTRAAT 9
2313 AD LEIDEN NL**

The poster emblemises and develops a post-formalist statement. The purist abstract image of the 'Concrete Painting' Poster represents a coordination point. That is, for a collaboration between myself, Guido Winkler and Iemke van Dijk from IS and Petit Port galleries Leiden, and Warren Taylor of The Narrows in Melbourne. It is commissioned for a box set for the 'Und Jetzt' (And Now) group exhibition held in the Netherlands, December 2007. This is a regular show where a range of like-minded artists from Australia, American and Europe meet. This year it is hosted by IS Project. It is not formal or curated in a regular sense, more like an association without membership per se...

The image for the poster comes from one of two works titled 'Concrete Painting' submitted for the event. The duco paintings done on artist board were inspired by the colours of a 1972 Porsche, as seen at a local mall in Sydney. However, the way the GT stripes have been re-oriented follows the form of a European street sign. These are unfamiliar in the South, but mark out where one zone of an urban district ends, and another begins. Curiously, these generally do not state what zone, just a numbered area for expected traffic behaviour.

Regardless, it is a foreign sign that struck me as a generic marker because it is about 'place' and, where 'place' as defined by rule language, is understood in code. My interest in painting can be just like that actually, and possibly because I studied sculpture and a different type of object-hood first. A generic aesthetic response to surroundings and, reductive art historical conditions may be one way to describe a relational paradox or, meta-theme at work. In this fashion, I am sure the poster arrived at through a series of negotiations and interpretations amounts to more than a semantic exercise. Importantly, it is another thing than the painting, the decal, abstract legends, and so on. But the presentational nature of the poster as art-object, sign, is itself intimately related to a speculative design methodology that inhabits a contextual intersection - of formalist ideas.

In a pedestrian sense there is an acknowledgment on my own part of powerful codes that have been visually serviceable for eons. Here I'm specifically referring to pre-modern heraldic iconography that is readily seen in places like the Bath Cathedral, or more aggressively on the shields of the Spartans as an older example, or, the infinite array of locational body markings found anywhere. Interestingly, the 'Chevron' and

its mass of associated motifs have greatly interested earlier 20th century artists such as, the influential Anton Stankowski from Essen as one further instance, and can lead as it does in the heraldic tradition through the process of the interpersonal or, literal marriage - towards massively complex design structures - those enigmatic structures are nevertheless readable by anyone interested in the basics of code. Essentially, this discourse is about is a single, recurring, and very useful mark.

As such, that unitary visual sign referred to in the poster, albeit in partial frame in the paintings as well (i.e. only one side of a chevron, the other absent arm is implied in counter-compositional terms - like a Van Doesburg) also assumes a known lexicon of more recent art-historical concerns, debate, and ongoing reductive refusals. Importantly, I do not choose to see a supposed crisis in visual art matters, and do not read contemporaneousness via revisionist doctrinarism. I prefer to locate a good idea to work with, acknowledge connections, and develop something either on my own or, with others.

In relation to this credo the Chevron fits neatly in to things at present. It is intriguing because it is emblematic of an open-plan. More importantly, at present it is seen straightforwardly as a design/symbol that wanders purposefully through history/histories. It remains a modern symbol that no-one can own stylistically, or philosophically - even after Stella's masterpiece's for instance or, Burens' architectural interventions as another. Being the literal doublet of the 'Stripe' the counter-compositional state of the Chevron implied in the diagonal banding remains a workable ideation in my opinion. Because like its parent sign, the Chevron, it can identify transpose, and fix new meaning onto the temporal orderings of as many shifting social experiences. Despite its extraordinarily generic nature, its sole underlining purpose is to impart specific meanings to others. A curiously bold sign in my opinion that is at once apodictic and capable in terms of uniquely readable fabulation.

Billy Gruner, Tempe Australia, November 2007.

Und Jetzt
8th - 16th December 2007
An International Project of Affiliated ARI Spaces

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The Narrows is fascinated by the convergence of art and design and does not preference either | www.thenarrows.org

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