

This interview was conducted during the run of Lee Machell's *Detail* at Supercollider Contemporary Art Projects, Blackpool, 26 July - 17 August 2013.

Lee Machell lives and works in Manchester. Recent solo exhibitions include *Interruption*, Platform A, Middlesbrough, England, 2013 and *Drawings & Matches*, Untitled Gallery, Manchester, England 2011. Recent group exhibitions include Rosie Farrell, Andrew Lim, Lee Machell, Carter Presents, London, England, 2013; *60 Drawings*, Bankley Gallery, Manchester, England, 2012; *Variable*, Untitled Gallery, Manchester, England, 2012; *Peering Sideways* (Sorry for the Inconvenience), Project Space Leeds, England, 2011. Machell is represented by Untitled Gallery, Manchester.

Tom Ireland is the Director/Curator of Supercollider Contemporary Art Projects.

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TI/ Thinking about your work in general terms there is a very spare aesthetic evident which seems to sync with the physicality of Supercollider's gallery space. How conscious of this were you when developing the show?

LM/ I was very conscious of it. Once I had been in the space at Supercollider I began to think towards the idea of a match piece as it seemed to be perfect for that particular space. Supercollider is small with large frontage windows which gives the space plenty of natural light, and because of this there is a focus on its smooth white walls and dark wooden parquet flooring. A simple burnt line along both walls would be very subtle and striking in this space.

TI/ *Detail* will overlap with *Interruption*, your solo show at Platform A in Middlesbrough. I am interested in the relationship between these two shows; the work in *Detail* is presented as a singular entity, abstracted from the wider narrative offered by additional works. There is also a version of the match work from *Detail* in *Interruption* as part of an ensemble of works. Can you discuss the relationship between these overlapping shows and relativity to one another?

LM/ Platform A and Supercollider are equally good spaces to work in but with different aesthetic qualities. Platform A is a large and spacious gallery with a screed lacquered floor; this gave me the opportunity to exhibit a small number of sculptural works alongside a match drawing that responded to the specific architecture of the space. Supercollider allowed me to focus solely on the match drawing as an installation. The ongoing match series offered a nice link between these two shows with one displayed subtly above head height, along a grey metal girder (Platform A) and the other along pristine white gallery walls (Supercollider).

TI/ In terms of the work presented, this is a typical presentation for you in terms of economy; the sum of the parts are relative to the output. How

important for you is the relationship between what goes in and what come out?

LM/ I do use the minimum of materials when making sculptural works and drawings. The match installations are no exception and the finished piece is always driven towards a visual simplicity. My piece *Handle* (2012) - in which two paint tub handles, one male and the other female interlock to form a loop that sits on the gallery floor - is typical of my output; this act of two pieces connecting to form a singular piece of work.



TI/ In the last interview, conducted for Jim Howieson's *One Man Show*, I said that I thought that in the UK there is a real issue with labour and value which seems to override public acceptance particularly when dealing with an artwork. The work in *Detail* is incredibly austere and interestingly is made up of equally austere means. How do you feel the audience reacts to your work, given that it is so stripped back in terms of both input and output?

LM/ Yes, I guess this can be a problem at times, depending on the expectations of the viewer. I think mostly the match works do translate well with the public. There is a curiosity about how they are made because, although it's a very simple process in its execution, it is not initially clear just how it has been achieved. Usually, it has to be explained but I think because of its linear simplicity and the process in making these pieces, these elements are enough for its success.

TI/ The ongoing work *Matches* has qualities which are aligned with a range of practical outputs such as installation and drawing, and even sculpture, how do you define the work?

LM/ Whilst the installation work leaves a burnt line - a charred series of marks - the works on cartridge paper result in a slightly different effect when using matches. I arrange the matches around objects, such as *Cap* (2013) which is an oil paint tube's screw cap; once lit, the matches lend a photogenic quality to the image in which the object's presence is paradoxically defined by its absence. These site-specific and paper based works I define as drawings.