

# WHITE

## HAMISH & ROSE

January 14 – 30, opening January 14, 6-8pm  
Collective Club Art Crit/ Artist Talks :: Sat Jan 30, 1-3pm

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*White* is a project by Hamish & Rose, a collaboration between artists Adrian Clement and Hayley Rose Hill. The exhibition is influenced by graphic designer Kenya Hara's 2010 publication *White*, which explores white not as a colour, but as a sensory experience that is linked, in traditional Japanese culture, to emptiness and silence. The concept of liminality is central to many of the works which comprise the exhibition, bringing the viewer to the threshold between the perceptible and the imperceptible. From near-invisible translucence to overwhelming opacity, the boundaries of white are challenged and become impossible to define in intellectual or dualistic terms. Through the mediums of photography, printmaking, sculpture and installation, the artists seek to express and present both the materiality and the sensory experiences of white itself.

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Works listed clockwise from entrance to Gallery 1 ::

*Ghost*, Lego, each sized 23.5 x 5 x 3 cm. \$400, edition of three plus two artist proofs.

*Apparition*, 52 page hardcover artist book, 18 x 18 cm. \$300, edition of three plus two artist proofs.

*White Water*, 20 page hardcover artist book, 18 x 18 cm. \$300, edition of three plus two artist proofs.

*Grose River Valley*, Inkjet prints on archival cotton rag paper, each sized 29.7 x 21 cm. \$400 (framed diptych), edition of three plus two artist proofs.

*Rose Water*, Bone china bowl and rose water, 7 x 15 x 15 cm. Not for sale.

*Once*, Candle and Caesarstone, dimensions variable. \$150, edition of three plus two artist proofs.

*Almost*, Inkjet prints on archival cotton rag paper, each sized 29.7 x 21 cm. \$600 (framed triptych), edition of three plus two artist proofs.

VERGE GALLERY



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White is a project by Hamish & Rose inspired by graphic designer Kenya Hara's 2010 publication of the same name, which explores white as a sensory experience that is linked, in traditional Japanese culture, to emptiness and silence. Whilst white, and emptiness, is often interpreted in Western culture as an absence or space to be skipped over (or filled in), and devoid of meaning, it is, by contrast, a deliberate aesthetic employed in various traditional Eastern cultures designed to symbolise the Buddhist notion of emptiness and to invoke a spaciousness and simplicity of mind. Hamish & Rose explore the formlessness of white, which reveals subtle distinctions and boundaries that are difficult to grasp in intellectual terms. The concept of liminality is central to many of the works which comprise the exhibition, bringing the viewer to the threshold between the perceptible and the imperceptible. From nearinvisible translucency to overwhelming opacity, the boundaries of white are challenged and become impossible to define in dualistic terms. Hamish's *Almost* illustrates, literally, the threshold between colour and colourlessness, through a series of inkjet prints of pastel colours (blue, pink and yellow) at such low opacity as to be barely recognisable. In *Apparition* by Hamish, titled after the word's origins in late Middle English, where the word implied "the action of appearing", a 52-page artist book gradually fades from black to white at its centre before gradually fading back to black by its end, allowing the viewer the experience the full range of shades that exist between our constructions of 'white' and 'black' and thus challenge them to question where 'white' begins and 'black' ends. These works encapsulate the essence of Clement's ongoing enquiry into work that is perceived outside of, and unmediated by, intellectual constructions, providing the viewer with an experience of simplicity and suchness. In *White*, Hara observes that the kanji for the word 'white' in Japanese is designed to resemble a skull, the kind of bone left by an animal after its death, bleached by the sun, suggesting notions of mortality and impermanence. Hara also notes that in the religion of Shintoism, many of its traditions and ceremonies, which celebrate the "eight million gods" within nature, employ the materiality of white, and the etymology of the word 'emptiness' in various contexts within Japanese culture, is inherently tied to white (evident, for example in the temple of worship in Shintoism, a site of physical emptiness, which in Japanese literally translates to 'white with a roof'). Hara calls white an aesthetic concept that is tied to and embodies conceptual emptiness; a container that has the capacity to hold and generate multiple impressions as well as function as a space of potentiality. These notions are evident in Rose's ephemeral installation *Once*, which comprises of a white candle that, once burnt, leaves its trace in the remains of wax. The white candle is neutral (or conceptually empty) and only implies a certain potency that can be shaped by the intentions of ritual. Similarly, in the installation *Rose Water*, which is simply a bowl filled with rose water, the visual aesthetic of emptiness conveyed through the white porcelain and clear water is juxtaposed by an invisible and intangible impression of roses that its scent invokes. As Hara writes in *Designing Design*, it is within this space of visual emptiness that "a whisper of production generates the greatest image." Clement's *Ghost*, two identical sculptures made in contrasting white and transparent clear, employs the materiality of Lego, which is designed to afford modularity and renewal through the creative acts of both construction and deconstruction, in reference to the reconstruction of the Ise Shrine which is rebuilt once every twenty years. In this tradition, as Hara writes, the "old building is terminated through a process of deconstruction" in a "ritual of rebirth that brings form to chaos". Thus, "the already 'familiar' object is purified and transformed into a new 'unknown' entity." Rose's artist book *White Water* echoes the visual aesthetic of *Ghost* by pairing each of its 22 close-up photographs of a small waterfall with a blank white page in every two-page spread. The resemblance is further established in the depiction of the motion of the waterfall, which brings opacity to the otherwise translucent water; seen closely, Rose's photographs immerse the viewer with the sense of awe one experiences when they see something for first time. Empty space also features in Rose's photographic diptych *Valley*, which depicts the view over the Grose River Valley from Evans Lookout in the Blackheath area of the Blue Mountains during a day of fog and mist. The photographs take up less than one half of each of the A4 pages they are printed on, and both the unprinted space and the representation of the mist are reminiscent of Hasegawa Tohaku's 16th century painting 'Pine Trees', which, as Hara writes, "seems to emphasize the empty space between the trees rather than the trees themselves." Hara observes that "[p]erhaps we should say that the painstaking execution of the misty atmosphere is the main theme of the painting rather than the trees themselves" and that "[t]he exquisitely dense atmosphere is filled with a subtle movement that leaves viewers' senses drifting in that space." Hara concludes that, "[d]espite its vagueness, our senses are drawn into that white space, where they are left to sway back and forth." Hamish & Rose perceive white, as Hara proposes, as "a phenomenon that arises within our sensitivity" and thus throughout their artworks that comprise this exhibition, the artists offer viewers a variety of opportunities to awaken their senses to the nature and materiality of white itself.