



GILES ROUND
DUBLIN

Giles Round's recent work never stops vacillating. Take *Pictures emerged from letters*, 2008, a freestanding painting that presents itself in the guise of a sculpture. But appreciate it primarily for its sculptural qualities, and its two-dimensional characteristics move to the forefront. Moreover, movement around the piece proposes practical functions beyond its artistic purpose. Its placement near the center of the room connotes a room divider, while the text covering the picture plane intimates that it may be more of a sign than a painting.

Round's ability to mine discrepancies makes *Pictures emerged from letters* a fascinating work. By pivoting the canvas ninety degrees in its frame, Round has reconfigured these traditional components. The resulting shape—a three-dimensional X—enables the work to stand on the floor. The piece's orientation contributes to the effect: the back of the painting greets us as we enter the room. This forces us to circumnavigate the structure to discover an expected image. In the process, more inconsistencies reveal themselves. As such, the essentially two-dimensional work offers us not one, but many points of view. Mentally rotating the canvas back into the frame, we notice the variance between its width and that of the frame's window. The sharp contrast between the untreated surface of the purple-heart wood frame and a black-and-white text delineated in synthetic media denotes a series of oppositions. Cumulatively, these incompatibilities cause us to assess and reassess. They undermine our expectations, keep us in a state between knowing and not knowing, and prevent us from precisely defining our experience.

XLOMFCNHNGNCINUDCWGENMMNCH, the exhibition's title, reflects the inherent complexity of the painting/sculpture [FOUR; October 31–December 4, 2008]. The string of letters evades syntactic analysis. Though we visually recognize and can sound out the characters, the construct fails to coalesce into a meaningful word or phrase. While the text on the canvas has not been executed in a standard typeface, it is legible. Designed

by Round, the characters suggest a visual code that, in most cases, is deciphered with assistance from the gallery's personnel. The text—*PICTURESEMERGED FROMLETTERSANDLETTERSEMERGEDFROMPICTURES*—centers on language's visual aspects. Along with the exhibition's title, these texts counter the precept that language is a shared communication system.

The second room features an arrangement in which the vocabularies of painting, sculpture, and text co-exist. Here, however, they have been distributed across three works arranged to mimic the modular components of a residential interior. *Pictures emerged from letters*, wall painting, 2008, wraps around a corner and spans the height of two walls. While Round has charged the work with color, the letters are harder to make out because he has laid them over a repeating pattern of triangles. The artist's use of a code further complicates the matter, but ultimately we realize that the exhibition's title and both painted texts are all related. Like an extended W, the cord of *Rise & Fall*, 2008, a light sculpture, animates and divides the space as it zigzags between pulleys mounted to the floor and ceiling. Finally, the plain linen canvas covering the cushions of *Daybed*, 2008, undermines the sleekness of the stainless steel frame. It offers a place of repose that encourages us to spend time with the artwork and let our minds wander.

After the successive notional stops and starts produced by the first work, the contemplative ambience of the second room promotes a re-evaluation of experience. Round's work points to the world around us. Bringing together art, design, and language, it proposes a place in which elements of the past and present have merged into a series of interrelated forms. The work elucidates and obscures, and tests our understanding of words and pictures. Our eyes meander from nuance to nuance, to the exterior visible through the windows and back in again. It conveys a sense of openness, of possibility—there is so much more to be observed.

—John Gayer

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Giles Round, *Pictures emerged from letters*, 2008 pigment ink, acrylic paint, pencil and primer on linen, purple heart wood, steel bolts, and cross dowels, 157.2 x 157.2 x 120 cm [courtesy of the artist and FOUR, Dublin];