

**GEOFF
KLEEM**

8 FEB - 9 MARCH 2013

REGIS

TO BE FLOORED AND SKIED

Geoff Kleem's sculpture comprises slender, heavily jointed arms that reach skyward, mid-salute, only to be weighted heavy-headed with a white monolith. The ceiling of the gallery has been dislodged in a perfect block and now sits propped, perched atop scaffold that like seventeen golden arms wrest their burden stiffly. Twisted into position, the scaffold manages to keep the ceiling aloft like a plug in the gallery, as if the gallery were filling Tetris-like with solids.

It was the norm in Victorian painting exhibitions for artists' works to be jammed in so that each frame braced the next, abutting one another so that no part of the wall was left uncovered. From ceiling to floor paintings would mosaic the walls like a wallpaper of small, contained universes.

"Are you to hire stilts to rise to the ceiling or to get on hands and knees to sniff anything below the dado? Both high and low are underprivileged areas. You overheard a lot of complaints from artists about being 'skied' but nothing about being 'floored.'" Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*.¹

Here in Aegis it is as if Geoff Kleem would like us to be both "skied" and "floored". The reaching scaffold emphasises both the upper reaches of the gallery space and the floor. Metaphorically Kleem guides us to the upper echelon, whilst also anchoring our feet to the boards. Without our foundations firmly grounded we would topple, as would the ceiling with its incumbent bulk.

But what is it to hold a false ceiling? Perhaps to prop a house of cards with scaffold is to uphold the artifice. It is a kind of bathos, where we privilege that which holds us up, but do not investigate the actual weight of our burden. In this work the golden struts are like frames, dividing and guiding our perspective with their directional gesture. We eye the long shiny arms as they elevate us to what? A loft. A garret. A heavy, sunken ceiling.

Kleem lifts us up, but only in part. We are rendered both floored and skied at once. He creates a crawlspace loft atop the monolith in the gallery space, directing our attention skyward only to prohibit access to this new crevasse. Kleem's false ceiling is like a box, the top of which we cannot gauge. Its contents are forever invisible, forever imagined. The garret and the loft in psychoanalysis are places of fancy; they house pliant princesses in lost turrets, and they bare the keys to buried treasures and the relics of dead relatives. To Gaston Bachelard the dreamer "constructs and reconstructs the upper stories and the attic until they are well constructed."²

Together with our dreamer Kleem tilts us skyward. Emphasizing this dislodged room space offers a kind of transcendence, where our garret levitates and our loft is happily impossible. Here the base logic of gravity and dirt can be forgotten, slipping from us as we climb the golden struts.

Emily Cormack

¹ O'Doherty, Brian, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1976, p.3

² Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press, Massachusetts, p.10









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Image captions:

Geoff Kleem

Aegis

18 carat gold scaffold, MDF and Plasterboard.

Photo credit: Geoff Kleem

**ARTS
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