

Paradise Row

HARRY
MEADLEY

— LEVEL 1

1 November – 6 December 2013



THE BASEMENT

HARRY MEADLEY

The writer Gregory Williams once described Martin Kippenberger's works as 'all punch line and no joke'. It's a description that could as aptly apply to Harry Meadley. His approach to narrative, display and meaning has an indirect humour, a leftfield sense of play. The wit emerges first in his use of titles. As the artist notes, 'The titles are super, super important. Without the titles they are just objects — it's the title that makes them artworks. It's like naming an animal — once it has a name it's special.' He describes his titles as a signage to meaning or concept (though what that is up to the viewer to work out).

Meadley's work exists in a playful, blurry place. One where space, object, immersion and meaning all come together in a complex take on narrative. 'I see myself as a story maker — rather than a story teller' he explains. 'It's a story being written in real time, which allows for others to have an effect on it.' Meadley creates chances for the viewer to enter the work. He uses play as a way to transmit ideas, and sneak the conceptual in.

— LEVEL 1

The structure of computer game narratives is presented here in contrast to traditional durational narrative of theatre, film, music or literature. Rather than passively flow from start to finish, the viewer has to 'complete' the work internally. The exhibition space has been wallpapered with the blue brick graphics from *Wolfenstein 3D*, the iconic computer game launched in 1992. The aim was to reconstruct a moment in history — the first time millions of people navigated a 3D environment on a 2D surface.

Here the cartoon Nazi dungeon — in the game decorated with portraits of Hitler and gold chandeliers — becomes the setting viewer's immersive and interactive experience. Except in this case there are blank objects in primary shape and colours. It is a twisted white cube-plastic-blue pages in a choose-your-own-adventure book.

The artist is inviting 'mystery shoppers' to fill out reports assessing the show and gallery which will be exhibited as the show's run continues. A new report will be visible each week — starting blank at the private view and then changing in time. In a way, the process offers alternative endings to the conceptual narrative Meadley presents.