



Rupert Norfolk, *Bamboo*, 2004, pencil on paper, 19 x 13 7/8".

the wallboard debris, a taped conversation with the journalist Christer Larsson offers up the secrets of Sweden's nuclear weapons production, hidden from the International Atomic Energy Agency for twenty-two years after the program officially concluded in 1972. With the IAEA pressing Iran to defer production of weapons-grade plutonium, Hasselberg justly wonders how creditable open and democratic societies can appear when their own history of secret wrongdoing has destabilized the social and political ideals Göransson tenderly remembers. Could it be that on the backs of Mik, Hasselberg, and other artists a consensus toward direct political purposes—ranging from disarmament to cultural diversity—might reemerge? Maybe, someday.

—Ronald Jones

LONDON

RUPERT NORFOLK DICKSMITH GALLERY

Rupert Norfolk's *I Beams*, 2003, is pretty much just that: four short lengths of steel arrayed, rather than arranged, on the floor. But boy, are these I-beams beautiful; if Selfridge's sold designer construction materials, they might look like this. The steel has been subtly spray painted in lovely lustrous steel hues full of depicted reflections and modulations—it's entrancingly atmospheric. Two paradoxes coexist in this work, then: a play between sculpture as material presence on the one hand and painting as purveyor of illusion, of virtual space and light, on the other; and the play between two different kinds of value, namely the functional and the aesthetic—

a differentiation itself aligned with social and economic distinctions between production and consumption, work and pleasure.

While *I-Beams* could be seen as both sculpture and painting, *Pixelweave*, 2004, somehow evades both designations, even while exploiting the same species of paradox. Let's just call it an object; or, more specifically, a rumped blanket tossed on the floor. But what immediately becomes clear as soon as one looks at the piece more than glancingly is that among the blanket's real, three-dimensional folds are scattered a number of purely depicted folds—images of folds that have been woven in. *Pixelweave*'s grid of colored checks had already been warped and doubled over before it was laid out. Social and economic distinctions are better hidden here than in *I-Beams*, perhaps so well hidden as to vanish into a sort of mental footnote: Most viewers will not recognize that this is no mere woolen blanket but is in fact an Aubusson tapestry. Fortunately, the woozy fascination of the object itself is sufficiently effective without the addition of this semiotic fold.

Also featured were three minutely detailed pencil drawings in a rather anonymous though conspicuously skillful illustrational style. What's consistent in these is an absolute airlessness. Everything in them—and that's a lot—is pushed right up against the picture plane as if it were a sheet of glass, as if playing on Alberti's idea of the picture as window. *Animals*, 2004, for instance, depicts four heads crowding up against this imaginary surface—an owl is easily recognizable, a deer somewhat less so because of the distortion that results, and it's only because I've read the accompanying essay by Peter Kapos that I know the others are a bear and a parrot, and that their distorted countenances are the product not of Norfolk's representational methods, but of the fact that they are based on neither the creatures themselves nor photographic images but rather on a bunch of rubber masks. In such drawings, Norfolk's cleverness seems self-defeating, perhaps because of the drawings' dry, unbeguiling style. It's really the sculptures' promise of immediate and pleasurable consumability that allows their slowly unfolding enigmas to take hold.

—BS

REZI VAN LANKVELD THE APPROACH

For the longest time, following the example of a writer I considered nearly infallible, I thought the adjective that defined the quality inherent in clouds, rocks, and