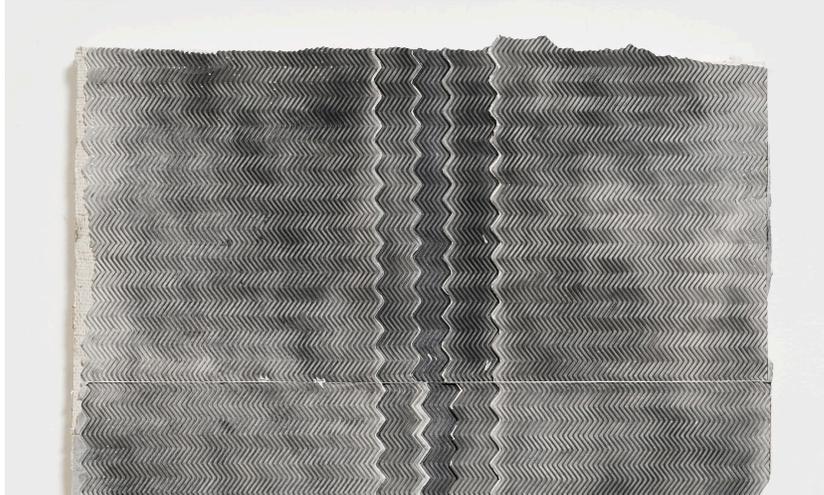


Ruairadh O'Connell's Chevron Relief III: a pattern of crime

By Oliver Basciano

August 25, 2017

The artist's 2017 work features chevrons cast from the same make of trainers worn by American footballer Aaron Hernandez when he killed his sister's fiance



Part of Ruairadh O'Connell's Chevron Relief III, 2017
Photograph: Andy Keate/Ruairadh O'Connell

Zig-zag

Chevrons abound in this solo exhibition by the young British artist. They can be seen in plaster reliefs, such as this recent work, a wall sculpture cast from sheets of rubber soling and hung on hessian. This example is far more muted than others in the show, which are spray-painted a variety of garish colours.

Warning

The zig-zag insignia has ancient origins, but became popular in Norman and gothic architecture as a relief, often carved into archways. Later it became a warning symbol, indicating danger or the need for greater attention. Here O'Connell neatly exploits our Pavlovian need to pay heed to this type of pattern.

Air Jordan

The chevrons are cast from the sole of a size 13 pair of Air Jordan Retro 11s. These were the trainers worn by American footballer Aaron Hernandez the night he murdered his sister's fiance in 2013. He left footprints.

Cluedo

This work references the black-and-white design of the shoes that implicated Hernandez. The black cloud that spreads over the repetitive patterning is fingerprint powder, reflecting the detective work that lies behind this wall sculpture. The exhibition as a whole begins to feel like a crime scene.

Everyday abstraction

The show continues O'Connell's interest in the stories behind everyday abstraction. While he might utilise the aesthetics of op art, his practice is anything but formalist: an earlier body of work saw the London-based artist investigate the psychology behind casino carpets.

Part of Profiles in Custody at Josh Lilley Gallery, W1, to 22 September