

**ROB TUFNELL**

**AT**

**83 PAGE STREET  
LONDON SW1P 4HA**

## **LSD**

**25 FEBRUARY – 19 MARCH 2016**

Rob Tufnell presents a series of editioned prints by Art & Language, Thomas Bayrle, Henning Bohl, Steven Claydon, Jeremy Deller, Jim Drain, Liam Gillick, Rodney Graham, Carsten Höller, Mark Leckey, Chris Martin, Aleksandra Mir, Matt Mullican, Laura Owens, Tal R, David Shrigley, Philip Taaffe, Mungo Thomson, Pae, White and Richard Wright.

Discovered by Albert Hofmann in 1938, mass manufactured for use in psychiatry by the pharmaceutical company Sandoz from 1947 and utilised by the CIA in the 1950s, Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, or LSD-25, was banned in 1967 after its widespread adoption by the counter culture.

An effective dose of this invisible, tasteless and odourless compound is 20-30 micrograms. Prior to the ban it had been supplied injected in solution, dripped onto sugar cubes (like a vaccination against polio) and, famously (by Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters), stirred into a bowl of Kool Aid. After LSD was banned the severity of being caught in possession, as with other narcotics, was determined by the weight of the prohibited substance found. For this reason and for other practical concerns in the early 1970s many illegal manufacturers opted to distribute doses using perforated sheets of absorbent paper – so-called 'blotter' – that had been immersed in the chemical. These were labelled with increasingly elaborate designs but usually adopting the same format: divided into 900 ¼ inch squares.

For some the ingestion of such 1/4 inch printed paper squares resulted in a significant rite of passage that promised some level of profound insight (but instead simply disrupted a capacity for basic perception). However, these paper squares became vehicles for an iconography or branding which, ironically, promoted clandestine activity. Rather than celebrating consumer society, they could be seen to have sought to undermine or circumnavigate it. They also recall (and occasionally quote) late Modernism, specifically: Conceptual art, Fluxus, Minimalism, Pop and Surrealism.

The exhibited prints follow an invitation to the artists involved to design a sheet of 'blotter' (without the active ingredient of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide). The resulting designs have each been reproduced in editions of 100 offset lithographic prints. They at once look back to the shamanic, drug-induced rituals of prehistory and to the signatory grid of Modernism.

Images can be viewed at [www.robtufnell.com](http://www.robtufnell.com)

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