

HENRIJS PREISS

b. 1973, Riga, Latvia
Lives and works in London, England

Henrijs Preiss's highly stylized paintings feature starkly coloured, emblem-like designs, typically in a reduced palette that includes cadmium, ochres, black, white and grey. Unsurprisingly, Preiss credits drawings of utopian architecture and the boldness of propaganda posters as informative of his work. 'I draw inspiration from urban architecture,' he notes, 'and from marks left by human intervention in large, monumental landscapes: from the deserts of Utah ... to "grid-like" streets of large cities, where everything seems to be connected and organized to keep a system running.' Preiss's process involves delving into the pictorial annals of history to identify and appropriate common elements that have recurred throughout the centuries and in the visual language of apparently

unconnected cultures. Once this esoteric visual syntax has been boiled down to its most basic, abstracted form, Preiss recombines it into 'complex, multilayered pieces that aim to tap into an archetypal visual and aesthetic language'. These diagrammatic works often feature a central mandala-like symbol, or sun-like rays spiralling out from a central nucleus. They also incorporate a wide array of obscure hieroglyphic codes that remind the viewer of systems of power, social organizations, religion and government. Perhaps Preiss intends to remind us that history is cyclical, that traditions and geographies are indefinite and blurred, and that our concepts of language and understanding are actually in a state of constant and infinite flux, repetition and meaninglessness.'

