



MARTIN CREED, INSTALLATION VIEW OF *WORK NO. 470, 2007*. BLACK AND WHITE EMULSION ON WALL, 19 1/2 X 73 FT. COURTESY HAUSER & WIRTH COPPERMILL, LONDON.

LONDON

MARTIN CREED

HAUSER & WIRTH COPPERMILL

It took only five minutes of sitting on the floor of Martin Creed's exhibition—I had broken my leg—for me to start thinking about the Great British Empire. Both Creed and Victorian England, when asked "Can you fill this space?" answered "Yes!" enthusiastically; but Creed's achievement was the greater. Victorian England only had to fill the Known World with its expanded personality; Creed had to fill Hauser & Wirth's huge and now defunct Coppermill space, and he made the most successful attempt at doing so. His post-Turner Prize Community Service penalty having not expired, Creed had to tidy up single-handedly after previous exhibitor Christoph Büchel's determined messiness. Creed's clean, clear exhibition was as elegant as his predecessor's was obnoxious, primarily thanks to Creed's use of angles.

The far-left wall was painted with huge stripes whose jaunty slant recalled the stripes of the department store John Lewis. These, and a long iron girder adjacent to them, set up directional pointers that guided the viewer's eyes round the space: paintings here and there, a neon piece, a large projection, and an enormous top-heavy pile of plywood boards, all of whose primary meaning seemed to be good-lookingness. It doesn't take much to make something really good-looking, but it must be done nice, and it must be done real tasty. As we were reminded by a lovely film of a man inserting his penis from behind into a woman's vagina, viewed tastefully from the side, the same applies to the erotic. In fact Creed's whole show was a master class in Nice, Tasty, and Elegant. In today's buying-crazy artworld, the successful filling of a space for people to see is a special treat, and Martin Creed is clearly more than a manufacturer of bits of art for you and your millionairesses: he is an *exhibitionist*. —TONY PEARSON