Commodity Form is an exhibition that brings together two solo painting projects by artists Colin Darke and David Mabb. While each project could be shown singly, the juxtaposition of the two opens a debate between the social and political concerns of the artists.

David Mabb’s Rhythm 69 is a series of 70 paintings made from a perplexing array of references. Pages from a 1960’s pattern book of William Morris wallpaper designs have been glued onto individual canvases. A number of images by the artist/film-maker Hans Richter are sequentially painted onto each page from the Morris wallpaper pattern book. The Hans Richter sketches are in turn from a storyboard for a proposed 1970 animated film, based on sketches by the artist Kasimir Malevich, dating from 1927. The result is a visually rich dialogue in politics, aesthetics and history.

David Mabb is influenced by the history of the designer, poet and essayist William Morris; reinterpreting Morris’ textiles to investigate political and artistic traditions. His solo exhibitions include A Factory As It Might Be or The Hall of Flowers, Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario (2003); William Morris, ‘ministering to the swinish luxury of the rich’ Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (2004); Morris in Jaipur: The Work of Art in the Context of Hand-made Reproduction, Jaipur and New Delhi (2005), Art into Everyday Life, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius (2006). In 2008, Rhythm 69 was shown at The Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast and in Alesund, Norway. David Mabb teaches at Goldsmiths College, University of London.
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Colin Darke’s The Capital Paintings is a series of 480 oil paintings in which a range of seemingly random things - e.g., sweet wrappers, found advertisements, bank statements - is painstakingly painted onto un-primed canvas. The collective impact of these things painted using the language of fine art raises questions both about the nature of art and about the origin and purpose of the selected objects. This work follows on from an earlier project in which Darke hand copied three volumes of Karl Marx’s Das Kapital onto 480 flat objects.