



Wolfgang Koethe *The Blue Dynamamos (The Russians)*, 1984

WOLFGANG KOETHE

For the past year, Wolfgang Koethe has used sporting imagery in his painting. From a starting point in press photos he has produced studies of 'faceless' footballers, racing drivers and snooker players. Koethe's concerns are, first and foremost, those of a painter. The sportsmen are featureless for primarily pictorial reasons – you can keep your eye on the ball as well as on Alex Higgins's eye on the ball; reasons which add depth to the depiction of that spectacular emptiness which provides counterpoint to the tedium of myriad individual existences.

Koethe likens his treatment of such themes to the kitchen still-lives of 17th-century Spain: the subject matter in both cases is commonplace and even, perhaps, slightly eccentric with regard to painting's traditional concerns. And it is because the sporting spectacle, unlike, say, that of film or advertising, is banal that one can see the possibility of a corrective to contemporary aimlessness; the possibility of forging a close connection between personal experience and aspirations as perceived in the accomplishments of others. 'What a beaut of a show!'

Michael Archer

At Coracle Press Gallery until May 25.