

# The Telegraph

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## Trafalgar Square plinth: beauty weighs four tonnes

Richard Dorment is blown away by Thomas Schütte's delicate sculpture on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square

When you go to see the sculpture German artist Thomas Schütte has made for the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, first make a list of the physical properties shared by all the other statues in the square.

You will find that they are solid, monochromatic, and vertical. At once, you see that Schütte has taken this list and inverted it to produce a statue that is transparent, colourful, and horizontal.

The artist calls it 'Model for a Hotel' and to my eye what makes the statue unique among the works already commissioned for the fourth plinth is that it is essentially an abstract assemblage of panes of yellow, blue and red, glass - a miracle of engineering that weigh four tons and looks like it would blow away in the first strong breeze.

Whereas everything else in the square is heavy and inert, the new piece is as light as air and suggestive of movement. As the light hits the flat panels of glass the colours change from hour to hour giving us a whole different visual experience at dusk than we had in the early morning light.

And, like one of Giambologna's Mannerist sculpture groups in Florence, it is almost impossible to stand still when you are looking at it. You feel you have to move around it because your eye never comes to rest.

That's when you discover that there is no completely satisfactory angle from which to view it. At the same time, every view is complete in itself.

And so, seen from the north looking south, it presents a shimmering façade of yellow glass. But view it from the east looking west, and it breaks up into two separate stacks of flat glass planes linked to a tilted stack of red and blue glass linked by an orange glass 'bridge'.

If that sounds complicated, it is: I don't think it is possible adequately to describe such a purely visual experience.

So far on the fourth plinths we've had Bill Woodrow, Rachel Whiteread, Mark Wallinger and Mark Quinn: two hugely successful works (Whiteread and Wallinger) and two duds (Woodrow and Quinn).

Original, striking, thoughtful and to beautiful, Schütte's work is among the best in the series. For the next 18 months it will be a pleasure to walk or drive by it.