

PRESS RELEASE

Transitions

Painting at the (other) end of art

May 24 - October 31, 2009



The Maramotti Collection opens its space for temporary exhibitions with a group show of works from its own recent holdings: thirty works by twenty-one artists who, independently of their various nationalities, all live and work in New York. Thirty works that have more in common than simply the period in which they were produced (2001 to 2008) and which first of all are marked by a conspicuous willingness further to expand the territories in which to seek out the conceptual and formal instruments through which to investigate painting in an epoch in which technology effectively dazzles the viewer with novelties of perception and sensorial experience that ever more distance from the humanistic history of the visual arts.

With the beginning of globalization and the need on the part of artists to operate in a linguistic territory of international scope, painting too was to undergo a transformation, entering into dialog (and at times into rupture) with its own particular history, and also taking cognizance of the evolution of the new media. From this point forward, the strategies of painting which have been put into practice are as numerous as the artists who practice them. Yet, none of the works presented in *Transitions* will entirely reduce to a discourse on method: their method is always a medium of iconographic discourse.

Painting must hold its own in the face of two different forces. In the construction of the painting, the artist doesn't hesitate to make use of instruments from the worlds of industry and

technology, and thus can articulate forms and surfaces that are physically consonant with the modes of perception promoted by mass products and mass emotions, no less than by the image pool of technology. Painting moves through areas that range from refuse and the found object to Photoshop.

Some of the artists (Perez, Rich, Domburg, Cotton, Craven, Ruyter, Gonzales, Loeb) appropriate their images from photographs or other media (newspaper clippings, post cards, books, film frames, digital elaborations, etc.) that preconstitute the represented subject, but this strategy of painting events that emerge from real rather than ideal worlds is used by the various artists in various different ways, and with various different goals in mind.

Henricksen, Jackson, Stockholder and Walker work with surfaces that share no more with traditional oil or acrylic on canvas than the aspiration to reconvene the historical ambitions of painting into the service of roles which are more advanced, even to the point that Walker's works address themselves to painting only by alluding to it.

For some (Perez, Rich, Domburg), the architectural image is a powerful vehicle for the inscription of history, with open political connotations, as an allegory of the social environment, as an allusion to the rites of mass society, and never in the service of an act that exalts the painting as pure surface.

For other artists who are present in the show (Perez, Zucker, Rich, Cotton, Ruyter, Gonzales, Barbeito) the process deployed in their work is of central importance. In the work of Schutz, Barbeito, Degen and Koether, the figures that appear in the paintings (or which disappear from them) speak clearly of the return of an archetype.

Today, in fact, the newness of an image is often in direct proportion to the extent to which it reveals itself to be the reinvigorated return of an archetype which is constantly subject to re-elaborations and interrogations on the part of our consciousness.

Modes of "abstraction" and "representation", often coexist within the work of each of these artists. De Balincourt, working with the objective and non-objective represents the two faces of the coin of his subjectivity. The apparent minimalism of Walsh's series of concentric geometric figures alludes more to magical inscriptions than to any declination of a rationalized and totally flat surface. The vast monochrome spaces which are anchored in the work of Tremblay into elementary serial geometries find their dominant form not in the rectangle, but in the archetypal

figure of the oval: ovals of various sizes cluster together on the canvas like living cells in constant proliferation.

The paintings of Essaydi offer a clear and open criticism of the bogus realism and lack of experiential authenticity that typify an entire phase of western painting. The works subvert the “colonial” vision that permeates the structure of “Orientalist” painting. An analogous use of the iconography of interior spaces—without description of anecdotal situations, and intent, instead, on shaping a project for painting—likewise defines the work of Zucker, whose architectures allude to social spaces without in any way representing them; they project an alternative mental reality, and are more on the order of interior landscapes.

Works by

Pedro Barbeito, Will Cotton, Ann Craven, Matthew Day Jackson, Jules de Balincourt, Benjamin Degen, Bart Domburg, Lalla Essaydi, Wayne Gonzales, Kent Henriksen, Jutta Koether, Damian Loeb, Enoc Perez, Daniel Rich, Lisa Ruyter, Dana Schutz, Jessica Stockholder, John Tremblay, Kelley Walker, Dan Walsh, Kevin Zucker

Opening, by invitation: Saturday, May 23, 2009, 6:00 p.m.

The exhibition can be visited, free of charge, from May 24 to October 31 during the same opening hours as those of the permanent collection:

Thursday and Friday: 2:30 – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday:

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 3:00-6:00 p.m.

Closed: August 1 – August 25, 2009

Info:

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