

Juste à côté // ARMLEDER, LAVIER, PINAUD, SANEJOUAND, THEUNIS

17 12 16 > 18 02 17 / Opening Saturday, December 17th (3- 8 p.m.)

From December 17th 2016 to February 18th 2017, the Galerie Catherine Issert is holding an exhibition entitled *Juste à côté*, comprised of works by artists John M. Armleder, Bertrand Lavier, Pascal Pinaud, Jean-Michel Sanejouand and Xavier Theunis.

Represented by the Galerie Catherine Issert since 1999, Pascal Pinaud will also be exhibiting his work simultaneously, from December 10th 2016 to March 5th 2017, at the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul de Vence (*Sempervivum*) and the Espace d'Art Concret in Mouans-Sartoux (*C'est à vous de voir...*). These two exhibitions will be followed by a third at the Fond Régional d'Art Contemporain de Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur (Marseille) in the summer of 2017.

An opportunity for Catherine Issert to recall certain artistic affinities with Pascal Pinaud: around this artist, the trans-generational exhibition *Juste à côté* brings together Jean-Michel Sanejouand, John M. Armleder, Bertrand Lavier and Xavier Theunis. Each in their own way, these five artists re-examine the legacy of Modernism in art, and especially in painting. Very clearly stated, their positions are not born of violent reactions to major modern issues, but derive more from stepping back and adopting a certain detachment, enabling them to review this heritage from a healthier distance. Unashamedly formalistic and appealing, their works bear the imprint of a gentle kind of radicalism.

In their various approaches, they bring into play both the history and status of works of art, and their relationship with the artistic process: by opening the borders between different genres (painting enters into a dialogue with objects, design, architecture, craftsmanship...), these artists break with pre-established hierarchies and use the series as an illustration of shared values and close relationships between materials, styles and references. They produce paintings with which they maintain a certain distance and objectivity: sometimes without a brush or even a stretcher; they re-invent the age-old gesture which consists of painting, accepting post-modern disillusionment without, however, losing their enthusiasm for its constantly renewed potential.

Works exhibited

Toile blanche et bande de plastique noire (1963) by **Jean-Michel Sanejouand** reinterprets a classic form of abstraction: it recalls, for example, Barnett Newman's zip while totally eliminating the emotional aspect of abstract expressionism. Purely factual, its title clearly states the materials used; objects of everyday use, vinyl and tape here become the vectors of a reflection on what painting is to become in our post-industrial society. A work which prefigures movements of pictorial liberation, such as *Support-Surface* (1969). Much later, his work *9.6.96* (1996) addresses the relationship between the object, its representation and painting. On a white background, textured by means of a broad sweep, Sanejouand paints a horizontal red stripe with an energetic stroke of the brush. Above it, the sketch of an everyday object, a knife, brings us back to the still-life tradition. Several pictorial stories are thus called upon together, to convey the idea of paint(ing) as both a physical material and a cultural reference.

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John M. Armleder defines this slightly «detached» stance rather precisely when describing it himself as an «alter-formalism». By calling the notion of originality into question, considering that someone else could well be the creator of his works, he also raises the issue of the hierarchy of the genre, using citations, or references, and appropriation as a means of distancing himself from his own creativity. His *Furniture-Sculptures*, associating salvaged pieces of furniture and abstract painting, challenge the concept of style, the academic nature of abstract art, endowing the work with the ambiguous status of «decorum». Between playfulness and first degree, Armleder plays a subtle game of evasion between style and non-style.

With his «peintures de chantier» («worksite paintings»), **Bertrand Lavier** demonstrates the different nuances between two colours which nevertheless bear the same name. *Rouge Framboise par Tollens et Boirolac* (1993) illustrates the fact that these two paint manufacturers, though wanting to describe an identical hue, target two different realities. Considering these industrial paintings as ready-mades, Lavier raises the question of the gesture as a signature, rejecting notions of technique and style. The industrial lexical system encounters that of art; here, bright, uniform colours take us back to both Minimalism and Pop Art.

In the *Test'Art* series, **Pascal Pinaud** uses photography to talk about painting and pictures. All one-off pieces, in the same format, they are enlarged photographs of colour tests used by car body repairers. Pascal Pinaud here attempts to blur the frontiers between popular and high-brow culture, and highjacks the functional gesture to bring it into the sphere of art. Pinaud thus tells us about the broader field of painting and, by appropriating someone else's gestures, raises the issue of style as an artist's distinctive sign.

Completed in 2009, the work entitled *Verde Alpi Fiat (09A04)* is inspired by windows pierced in utilitarian vehicles to allow for passenger transport. Three holes were pierced in a lacquered and varnished sheet of metal, surrounded by insulation joints and covered with orange acetate. Belonging to the *Tôles / Principes de réalité* series, this work, as is often the case with this artist, is born of motifs taken from reality which are brought into the field of abstract painting. Referring to the shade of the automobile lacquer used, the title itself pays homage to «industrial beauty» and draws attention to shared relationships between esthetic and commercial values.

The works *Sans titre (Vue d'Atelier #17)* and *Sans titre (Paysage #88)* by **Xavier Theunis** are composed of scraps of advertising tape stuck to thermo-lacquered aluminium. He, too, thus uses industrial materials to produce his works: he relies on cuttings made by the worker from the ends of reels of tape, and constructs his composition from these lines, which can be more or less straight. Repeated and interlocking, the pattern demarcates irregular bands of colour, separated by spaces revealing the aluminium support. This protocol gives rise to works all about the surface, untouched; a distinctive sign to be found in most of his productions.