

CHARLES RIVA COLLECTION

MADE IN NEW YORK

The exhibition brings together works conceived by eight American artists, born for the most part between 1970 and 1980 and associated with the New York scene. Their work testifies of the emergence on the American East coast of a new pictorial language questioning the status of the paint and that of the picture, in a time when digital technology upsets the codes of representation.

Christopher Wool (1955) appears as the veteran and the guardian figure of this movement. From the end of the '80s, he developed an aesthetic influenced by the conceptual movement, halfway between informal painting and Pop art. Wool combines often various techniques such as stencilling, spraypainting, silk screen printing and digital reproduction. The presented work (Untitled, 1988) is characteristic of the moment when, at the end of the 80's, the artist begins to combine the principle of silk-screening associated with minimal art with a gestuality stemming from *street art*.

A contemporary of Wool, **John Miller** (1954) has developed an eclectic method of working (painting, music, installation, sculpture, photography) which plays with the intended categories of the art. The Edge of Night (2008) is a representative piece of the amused and ironic attitude which the artist has regarding the sanctification of art works. Consisting of scrap objects bound together by a thick coat of paint which imitates the gold leaf, the panel sends the viewer to a time between Duchamp and Pop art, while evoking the visual impact of a monochrome golden work of Yves Klein.

Rooted in another generation, **Kelley Walker** (1969) has a strong interest in the recycling of images, and in the process eventually questions their function as vehicles of information. His triptych Black Star Press (2004), which combines screenprinting and paint, uses symbolic photos of interracial violence. The work distinguishes itself from Warhol's by the surtax of spatters of white and brown color, which gives Walker the trait of uniqueness. In other areas, the gesture of the artist is totally absent, as in the two circular metallic plates cut with a laser, which mock the codes of the consumer society (the initials associated "recycling", on the one, in images of sweet food and, on the other one, in gold leaf).

For **Blake Rayne** (1969), the painting must be visualized in its global process of creation, presentation, sale, even transport (he exposed boxes which contained the works in the space of exhibition). Rayne works according to "procedures" or "scripts" which vary constantly, and neutralize any attempt to apply a "style" t. The process of folding and unfolding which is at the origin of Untitled 8 (2007) could, in the abstract approach of the artist, visualize the creative act as a metaphor .

Seth Price (1973) is a member of the Continuous Project (which also includes the artists Wade Guyton, Bettina Funcke and Joseph Logan), a collective who "brings back into circulation publications or discussions of artists from previous generations, by means of recreated visual works and performances". The recycling of images is in the center of its initiative. Price produced by means of industrial machines works which are halfway between paintings and sculptures, capturing objects of everyday life in some polystyrene by using a vacuum technique. He involves a simple rope thrown on the medium, a way for the artist to introduce the notion of fate into a process of mechanized manufacturing.

Cheyney Thompson (1975), takes this logic to the extreme: his paintings which seem to participate in a rigorous geometrical abstraction are realized from a scanned, enlarged cloth, then reproduced on a new medium by using three primary colors, according to a complex system based on a personal calendar. As Kelley Walker, he also resorts to the laser: in these works which associate paintings on paper with sheets of aluminum, the perfection of the shape created by the machine contrasts with the gestuality of the image.

By comparison, the work of **Josh Smith** (1976), in particular his Sponge Paintings, is more centered on the gesture of the painter. By juxtaposing simple photocopies with forms painted by him, Smith questions both the status of the reproduction and the peculiarity of the artistic work. He mocks the fact that the name of the artist is sometimes more important than the quality of the work, he uses the letters of his own family name as basic motives for a series of paintings.

Nate Lowman (1979) and **Valérie Snobeck** (1980) are the youngest artists of the exhibition. Lowman, who participated in the last Biennial event of Lyon, recycles and revisits images and objects which populate our everyday life, or are an integral part of the popular culture (portraits of Che or Jim Morrison, smiley emoticons, safety instructions placed aboard planes, etc.). Of a more complex manner, the works of Snobeck use mirrors, in particular the metallic surface of which she removed by scratching, rubbing, or by acid. Only traces of reflections remain, to which the artist adds very diverse elements such as some wood, paint, some ceramic, or digital drawings.

The exposition offers a beautiful panorama of the way the painting does not stop reinventing itself, particularly when touched by the new possibilities offered by digital technology. These works, which often require an effort of attention on behalf of the spectator to be captured in all their complexity, remind us the necessity of exercising our attention in a world saturated by images.

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