

Renaud Regnery

Ritournelle

01/14 – 02/26/2011

Opening: Friday, January 14th from 6 – 9 p.m.

Renaud Regnery's works comprehend painting as a field full of tension, which on the one hand evokes the confrontation with the history of the medium and the discussion connected to it, and at the same time holds possibilities of (self)assertion and allocation. Connected to this is his interest in dealing with inherited, social conventions, their aesthetic manifestations and psychological questions. His way of working shifts between closed image cycles and quasi serially developed groups of work that are realized either in a merely painted manner or by using various printing techniques and painting materials. In addition, Regnery establishes a conscious confrontation with the specific presentation and perception patterns of painting by using architectural means, stillages or certain systems of hanging.

"Ritournelle" – the title of Renaud Regnery's first solo exhibition at the gallery – alludes to the initially described ambivalences: this term originates from the Renaissance and Baroque period where it delineates a particularly catchy and continuously returning fragment of a melody and to which a certain timeless character is ascribed. Today's French colloquial language, however, uses the term rather in the sense of 'redundant', 'well-known', or 'not very spectacular'. The way the word 'Ritournelle' is written and pronounced already points to the dimension of the exhibition with regards to content: the association to embellishment and curlicue is well-selected as hidden agenda.

The presented works set their focus of interest on the 'ornament' – a term that has been one of the most disputed topoi in the beginning of the 20th century and has not lost since in its potential of conflict. Once conceived as a utopian idea of the harmonic relationship between the individual and society, it was soon to be picked up by the industry and turned into its opposite – produced by the thousands and stuck to the homely wall as ordinary, replaceable wallpaper. In his 'wallpaper and silkscreen paintings' Renaud Regnery is dealing exactly with this ambivalence. He isolates motifs, distances them from their origin by specific working processes and at last re-individualizes them by the painterly gesture. The mass product wallpaper and the serial production of the silkscreen becomes hazed by the subjective treatment with spray-paint and color application. Regnery consciously forces disparate layers together, blurs traces and discloses new spaces. Although the canvas is treated rather laminary and with a constraint flow, the works develop nevertheless a strong physical presence that embodies in its result likewise a critical questioning and categorical assertion of the painterly process.

In addition, Renaud Regnery has re-structured the gallery space via an architectural element that is conceived of as an in-between of inserted floor boards and over-dimensional podium. Constructed just a little higher than the usual step, the element changes the view of the individual works but also the impression of experiencing the whole exhibition. This form of presentation underlines the character of the single images, whereby each one claims its specific autarchy while hinting at the combined context at the same time.