

Albert Oehlen

November 1 - December 20 2008

Galerie Max Hetzler Temporary is pleased to announce an exhibition of recent and early paintings from 1991 by Albert Oehlen at OsramHöfe in Berlin-Wedding.

Albert Oehlen constantly interrogates the methods and means of painting in order to raise a sense of awareness of the medium. In this exhibition, two series are presented alongside each other: abstract paintings from 1991 and current work from this year. In his new paintings, Oehlen has used oil paint over Spanish advertising posters collaged onto white, primed canvases. In contrast to Oehlen's former working methods, the use of paint has become more reduced - focusing on the centre of the picture while other areas of the canvas remain free.

Oehlen's 1991 paintings are completely filled with colour: nothing stays empty and rarely is there any part of canvas with only one layer of paint. No lines of perspective, motives or colour concepts are visible - the paintings do not follow the common compositions of form and colour, but consist instead of countless layers of shapes that result in disturbances in the viewer's visual field. This chaotic and seemingly random disorder has an overwhelming appeal - simultaneously dealing with the concept of abstraction, as well as with the viewer's perception.

In his recent paintings, Oehlen's use of irritating advertising posters through the combination and overlapping of their terms and themes is carried to an extreme. One poster, which is supposed to connote luxury and seduce to Christmas shopping, disappears under the word hur€ (whor€); another, an advertisement for English Courses offered by the British Council in Spain is subtitled with the French word merde (shit) - isn't swearing the first thing you learn in a foreign language?

However, those who would only see a simple condemnation of consumer frenzy or European language amalgamations fall for Albert Oehlen's scheme. Figurative elements rub against each other and are processed until they lose their contextual meaning and become pure form. Hereby, the pictorial flow is not lost. On the contrary - Oehlen's reduction of colour and form bring out the different dynamics combined on the canvas. Quick dashes of colour that are decelerated by milky taints emphasize the complexity of each painting.

All 1991 paintings are on loan from private collections. A catalogue will be published by Holzwarth Publications, Berlin.

Albert Oehlen, born in Krefeld in 1954, lives and works in Spain and Switzerland. Since 1981, he's had regular solo shows at Galerie Max Hetzler. Museum exhibitions include: Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2006); Arnolfini, Bristol (2006); Kunsthaus Graz (2006); MOCA Miami (2005); Secession, Vienna (2004); Musée Cantonal de Lausanne (2004); Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg (2002); Kestner-Gesellschaft, Hanover (2001); Kunsthalle Basel (1997) and IVAM Valencia (1996).

(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)