

Opening on Sunday, December 14, Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to present Chapter 12: iamb, R.H. Quaytman's first one-person exhibition at the gallery.

Chapter 12: iamb comprises two sets of paintings, one for a two-person show with Josef Strau at Vilma Gold in London and the other for Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York. Both sets use the motif of a painting lit by a lamp as the foundational image around which the other works coalesce. The concurrent exhibitions mark the first time R.H. Quaytman has shown in commercial gallery spaces since 2001.

With these contexts in mind, the subject for this chapter turns back to painting itself and, specifically, its relationship to the blind spot. Like actual vision, Quaytman's paintings have a blind spot, whether it be from a light source in the picture, an optical illusion, a trompe l'œil effect, the absence of color in a black and white photograph, or the picture in plan. This recurring 'absence' enables the works to activate one another, yet it also often shifts the axis of legibility between neighboring paintings. While the paintings can suggest an alternate position for the viewer's body moving by the picture, or, further, literally repel vision through optical static, they ultimately affirm their own autonomy. While it can be said that they are made to influence flow from one picture to the next, no single painting suggests what the next will be. Each work allows the viewer to look at and into it, to focus from near and far, to see it as part of group or in isolation. In the end, the picture always actively refers back to the painting itself, and then out to all that surrounds it.

For a period of three years – until May 2008 – R.H. Quaytman acted as the director of Orchard, a collaborative artist run gallery in New York's Lower East Side reconciling the divergent narratives of movements such as institutional critique, Kontext Kunst, and the legacies of Latin American and Eastern European vanguard practices of the sixties and seventies. It is perhaps then fitting that her artistic practice reconsiders critiques of the autonomous art object wherein the idea of painting serves as a model for the larger discursive meanings of art. Her use of wood panel as material support and her frequent grounding of the picture plane in photo-based silk screening, underscore the perceptual, perspectival and durational experience of painting as an assessment of the larger social, historical, personal and architectural contexts in which her work appears.

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