

Monika Baer's third exhibition with Richard Telles Fine Art, entitled *Murals and Muse*, presents paintings from a new series that could be termed "paintings on walls." Here, the oppositions of flatness versus space, figure versus abstraction, symbol versus cipher are staged, constructing highly charged sites with motifs as props, including brick walls, red fields of color (in front of which a realistically rendered chain swings), gestural strokes of titanium white paint, and white playing cards. In these paintings, the backdrop, the canvas, is emblematic of a wall on which paint is smeared, whose cracks are filled, and thick oil paint is painstakingly troweled over as mortar. Baer's motifs come together to perform specific constellations and embodiments, reappearing continually in other guises and functions within the different series.

Formally and technically the white playing cards, as an example, are directly correspondent to the white breasts in the blue "breast paintings" shown with Richard Telles Fine Art in 2008. The way the cards fan out from behind the brick wall echoes the breasts protruding from the seams. The breast's white squirts transmute into a new role as painterly gestures. A series of cut canvas paintings based on actual spider webs (*Monochromes*, 2009), reveal the stretcher as well as the wall of the exhibition space. As if in a counter motion, the wall behind them seems to have diffused back into the surfaces of the new paintings of *Murals and Muse*. The muse appearing in a collage takes up this permeability and mirrors questions of gendered representations of subject and object in painting.

One thing not only follows the other, but follows from it as well—be it by breaking out of it, displacing, or dissolving it. In this way, the forms of interaction occurring within a painting, between paintings, as well as between the series of paintings, are related. Following Baer's paintings, series, and shows, it is evident that this is an ongoing work on one and the same project, one that continuously puts the potential of painting up for discussion between picture and object, identity and content, between empathy and reflection.

Monika Baer has recently held solo exhibitions at Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin, Golden Pudel Club, Hamburg, and Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich in 2009. She's been included in group exhibitions at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin and Centro Cultural Andratx, Mallorca, Spain in 2010. In 2007 Baer was included in Documenta 12, Kassel. Baer lives and works in Berlin.

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