

# renwick

## Gaylen Gerber

September 17 - October 29, 2011

Opening reception: September 17, 6-8 PM



Renwick Gallery, in cooperation with WallSpace, is pleased to present an exhibition by Gaylen Gerber. For this exhibition, Gerber presents four artworks in a way that confuses easy distinctions between object and context, questioning how we differentiate what we understand from what surrounds it.

Gerber is interested in addressing ideas surrounding perception, particularly the role of context in perception. His work often acts as the contextual ground for the expression of other artists. In this exhibition, Gerber continues to examine the role of the contextual ground in the interpretation of art but also specifically foregrounds the background or context as an expressive element itself. He focuses attention on his use of other artists' expressions as a normative ground against which his own expression can be recognized. When we walk into the exhibition we are greeted by a number of artworks, few of which were produced by or with Gerber but all of which he employs. This overt redirection of attention toward himself could be recognized as humor, healthy narcissism or something more megalomaniacal. His exhibition directly confronts the permeability between these distinctions as well as the relationships between artists and artistic practices.

This may be most apparent in Gerber's use of Kathryn Andrews' *Gaylen Gerber*. This piece was originally made for a three person exhibition at Thomas Solomon Gallery at Cottage Home in Los Angeles in 2010 that included Gerber and was intended, at least in part, to be a joke at his expense. When we see *Gaylen Gerber* as an artwork and an artifact of Andrews' practice, everything else, including Gerber and the way he situates her work in the present exhibition, becomes the ground against which we see her piece. Conversely, when we consider Gerber's situation of Andrew's piece as his work, the piece becomes part of the background to Gerber's expression.

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This kind of reversal continues throughout the exhibition. Gerber made *Support/Giotto's Dream for Gaylen (Yellow Crowd Version)* in cooperation with Jeni Spota. Spota literally turned the face of Gerber's *Support* to the wall and applied her image to the back of the canvas, a gesture that is aggressive but also draws attention to the flexibility between expression and ground. A similar exchange occurs in Gerber's *Support*, in which *Eshu or Legba or Eris etc. 2*, a painting by Nicholas Cueva, has been redesignated as Gerber's own. The painting exhorts viewers to spit on it in order for it "to be truly seen". It's uncertain whether Gerber's intent was to become the recipient of this "seeing" as he usurps and preserves Cueva's expression.

The constant exchange between artists and artistic expressions is key to Gerber's practice. Gerber's work continually refers to other artists in a way that leads to an awareness of this broader system of relationships and thus accentuates the conditional quality of any interpretation.

Gaylen Gerber has exhibited widely. Recent solo exhibitions and cooperative projects include: Kunstverein Ruhr, Essen, Germany; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, Bremen, Germany; Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland; Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Bourgogne and Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France.

For further information please contact the gallery at [info@renwickgallery.com](mailto:info@renwickgallery.com)