

Gaylen Gerber

Studio for Propositional Cinema

Ackerstr. 24, 40233 Düsseldorf

18 October - 8 November, 2015

14 November - 6 December, 2015

Studio for Propositional Cinema is pleased to announce two consecutive exhibitions by the American artist Gaylen Gerber.

Gerber's exhibitions build on the recognition that the Studio for Propositional Cinema occupies the former workspace of Daniel Spoerri, a proponent of Nouveau Réalisme. His name remains on the door where it was painted decades earlier and Gerber's exhibitions build on these associations as well as the larger realist tradition.

In the exhibition's first manifestation, Gerber presents three artworks, *Support*, oil paint over *Optimal, model 121* by Joe Colombo; *Backdrop*, a contextual artwork that serves as the background for the Studio and literally foregrounds the souvenir from Daniel Spoerri; and *Support*, a readymade canvas whose surface presents a single hair from the head of Richard Trenton Chase.

In painting directly over Colombo's expression Gerber makes the designer's pipe into an image and echoes René Magritte's *La Trahison des Images*, which presents an image of a pipe captioned with the words "This is not a pipe". In both artists' work the use of a framing device is employed to contradict the viewers' assessment that the item is a pipe. Gerber's deliberate reprise of Magritte's point that the image is not the object also draws special attention to history as a context that influences how we understand image and object alike.

Richard Trenton Chase was an American spree killer responsible for the deaths of six people. He was nicknamed *The Vampire of Sacramento* after it was learned that he drank the blood of his victims and cannibalized their internal organs. In 1979, Chase, a diagnosed schizophrenic stood trial for murder. Even though his history of mental illness suggests that his crimes were not premeditated, the jury found Chase guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced him to die in the gas chamber. Other inmates aware of the bizarre nature of his crimes, taunted Chase and urged him to kill himself. In December 1980, a guard found Chase dead in his cell.

The hair presented was harvested from the head of Richard Trenton Chase in San Quentin Penitentiary before his suicide and helps frame an instance in which the systems established to safeguard us and address justice, failed. Gerber presents it without implying inherent significance and questions the distinction between the individual and the collective to underscore a sense of ambiguity or ambivalence about the world, even as an appreciation of multiplicity and community are central to his interests. His framing of authorship as a network of individuals and expressions presents a complexity of interpretations that frustrates easy description and helps us understand his denial of edification. He asks instead that we determine our own way out of his work's myriad associations.

In the second exhibition Gerber presents two *Supports*, each oil paint over cinematic props of Nazi scalps from Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds*.

Gaylen Gerber has exhibited widely including recent projects at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago. This is his first and second exhibitions in Düsseldorf. For further information contact studio@studioforpropositionalcinema.com