

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Gaylen Gerber / Joe Scanlan**

May 21 - June 27, 2009

Opening Reception: Thursday May 21 6-8pm

Wallspace is pleased to present a special two-person project by long-time friends and collaborators Gaylen Gerber and Joe Scanlan. Scanlan and Gerber have shown together at *Documenta IX*, Kassel, Germany, *Domaine de Kerguehennec*, France, *Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery*, New York, the *Resource Center*, Chicago, and the *Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean*, Luxembourg.

The limits of comprehensibility have been a theme in both Gerber and Scanlan's work throughout their careers. In Gerber's case, this has to do with a viewer's ability to discern things—objects, symbols—from the visual field they inhabit, be it a painted canvas ground, a wall covering, or a wash of light. For Scanlan the idea of incomprehensibility has been more utilitarian and consumption-based, having to do with our ability to distinguish such artworks as a nesting bookcase or a cosmetic tear from their networks of circulation and use. For both artists, the contexts in which their works appear and a certain economy of production are key subtexts to how their works are perceived.

For this show Gerber and Scanlan interweave a theme that might best be described as "chromatic intervention," whereby the artwork and the artist act as a kind of prism that materials and information pass through and, in that process, become transformed.

Over the past few years, Gerber assumed possession of a number of Plexiglas panels by French artist Daniel Buren from his work *Crossing Through the Colors*, a work *in situ*. Buren typically uses a signature motif of alternating bands of white and color as a means of relating art to its situation rather than presenting his work as standing alone. The panels are remnants from the work *in situ* and are commonly referred to as souvenirs. Interested in the latent referential potential of these souvenirs, Gerber has shaped a number of works that both skirt and confront the idea of permeability in an artist's work and practice. Shaped is the operative word here, since Gerber is as concerned with subsuming the souvenir as a context for his expression as he is with acknowledging both artists' shared concerns with an artwork acting as the ground against which other expressions are perceived.

For the Wallspace exhibition, Gerber has applied silver leaf, an alternate neutral ground, to the reverse of several of the souvenirs, hung them on walls painted in similar and contrasting hues, and bathed them in tinted light - suffusing color with color to the extent that our eyes often drown in its saturation. As far as our cognitive faculties are concerned, it's uncertain whether the differences that we perceive are contained within the image, the frame, or the exhibition space. It almost seems that everything, including the whole of the exhibition context that we would normally be perceived as the background for expression, remains in the foreground of our perception and understanding.

Over the past year, Scanlan read a number of seminal economic texts and noticed that a strange thing kept happening: where the original authors wrote about absentee ownership, stagnating markets, government subsidies and colonialism, in the artist's head they were talking about artists' neighborhoods, blue-chip galleries, Tae Kwon Do lessons and Jack Kerouac. Fascinated with these recurrent,

uncontrollable synapses, Scanlan rewrote the texts as he heard them in his head and color-coded each alteration but left the majority of the original wording intact. On a computer screen or the printed page, the texts still read legibly as texts but also become images, the chance placement of the variously tinted words creating a shimmering painterly effect reminiscent of Ad Reinhardt or André Derain. In the texts, the staid grammar of economics is suffused with the irrational exuberance of ambient color.

Scanlan's contribution to the show will be *Red Flags*, an elegant book containing four essays on economics "refracted" from original texts by Thorstein Veblen, Joseph Schumpeter, Milton Friedman and Edward Said. The razor-sharp artist's book was designed by Francesca Grassi and is the inaugural publication of Paraguay Press, a subsidiary of castillo/corrales, the Paris-based gallery, bookstore and curatorial offices of François Piron, Thomas Boutoux, Benjamin Thorel and Oscar Tuazon.

At the heart of this exhibition is Gerber's and Scanlan's recognition of the shifting relationships between an expression and its ground, and the way those relationships are further altered in the cognitive mind of the viewer.

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Gaylen Gerber has exhibited widely. Recent solo exhibitions and cooperative projects include: The Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg; The Art Institute of Chicago; Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen, Bremen, Germany; Kunsthalle Bern; and the FRAC-Bourgogne and Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France.

Joe Scanlan has staged one-person exhibitions at IKON Gallery, Birmingham, England; the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; the Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne, France; and K21, Düsseldorf. He is also a frequent contributor to *Artforum* and *frieze* magazines, as well as his own website, [www.thingsthatfall.com](http://www.thingsthatfall.com). He was recently appointed Director of the Visual Arts Program at Princeton University.