

Gaylen Gerber
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Pro Choice is pleased to present an exhibition by Gaylen Gerber. For this exhibition, Gerber presents three artworks in a modified situation that confuses easy distinctions between object and context and heightens awareness of perception, questioning how we differentiate what we are looking at from what surrounds it.

Gerber typically focuses on the normative aspects of visual language: the way we, as part of a shared culture, accept certain forms, colors and situations as institutional, or take them for granted as impartial common ground. These visual norms act as grounds for all other forms of expression and we use them to register difference and create meaning. Gerber's work is often positioned so that it highlights the relationships between the frequently invisible normative aspects of visual language.

In this presentation, Gerber focuses on artworks in which he uses silver, a "neutral" medium gray, as the ground against which we form meaning. Gerber applies silver leaf to one side of a number of remnants (which are commonly known as souvenirs) from Daniel Buren's in-situ work *Crossing Through the Colors* from 2006. Buren is well known for making work that relates to its situation rather than standing alone. Gerber uses the souvenirs to create artworks that raise our awareness of the permeability between artists and between artistic practices. When we see the souvenir as a remnant of Buren's exhibition, everything else, including Gerber's *Support*, becomes its ground. Conversely, when we consider Gerber's *Support* as an expression, the individual distinction of the souvenir is lost and it is seen as a part of the background of Gerber's work. Thus, the souvenir from Buren's exhibition and Gerber's *Support* are positioned interchangeably as both ground and expression. The fluid exchange between elements in this work underscores the conditional quality of Gerber's practice and illuminates the role of the ground in determining value.

Gerber further conflates differences between elements by altering both the color of the light and the color of the room to suggest an added permeability in the exhibition, questioning both the implicit neutrality of the exhibition context and emphasizing the fluid quality of the relationship between expression and ground.

For example, when we try to “see” *Support*, a work that Gerber has installed in the lower gallery of Pro Choice on walls painted in an amber hue and bathed in an amber light, it’s uncertain whether the color perceived is contained within the artwork or in the exhibition space. As we try to differentiate the *Support* from its situation, everything, including the whole of the exhibition context that would normally become its background, remains in the foreground of our perception and understanding.

This shift in understanding as we move around the work focuses awareness on the performative character of Gerber’s practice and of any interpretation, and ultimately returns us to an individual visceral experience that suspends easy apprehension.

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.