

Gaylen Gerber
Rowley Kennerk Gallery
January 18 – February 28, 2008
1190 N. Peoria Street 3C
Chicago, IL 60607

Rowley Kennerk is pleased to present its first exhibition of works by Gaylen Gerber.

In this exhibition Gerber presents five artworks. Gerber's practice is regularly situated in relation to the work of other artists: in this exhibition, that of an unidentified artist, Daniel Buren, Louise Lawler with Allan McCullom, Adrian Schiess and Heimo Zobernig.

In previous exhibitions Gerber has addressed ideas surrounding perception and particularly the role of context in perception. Gerber's paintings act as the contextual ground for the expressions of other artists. For this exhibition, Gerber continues to employ his work as the contextual ground for other artworks but he also specifically foregrounds the ground as an expression itself.

Gerber is interested in the normative aspects of visual language: the way we, as part of a shared culture, accept certain forms, colors, etc. as institutional or we take them for granted as neutral common ground. These visual norms act as grounds for all other forms of expression and we use them to register difference and create meaning. His *Supports* are positioned so that they highlight these relationships by representing the often invisible normative aspects of visual language, as suggested by their original "neutral" gray color.

The paintings in the *Support* series typically begin as grey monochrome canvases painted by Gerber. Gerber then gives these paintings to other artists to use as supports for their work; in this case Adrian Schiess and Heimo Zobernig painted their work directly on top of Gerber's paintings. In *Support/Untitled* Zobernig paints Gerber's original gray ground white (an alternate neutral), thus questioning the grounds claims to objective neutrality. By contrast, through his emphasis of the painting's image, Schiess addresses the "neutrality" of Gerber's *Support* in an entirely different manner. In *Support/Moon*, Schiess obscures Gerber's ground with his own image. In the final painting, *Support*, Gerber reciprocates by repainting the gray ground over *Support/Moon*. This exchange showcases the fragility and conditional quality of both positions. This provisional quality is reiterated in *Support*, realized on an unidentified *Available Painting* and in Louise Lawler's and Allan McCullom's *Fixed Interval*, a work that functions as a stand-in for other artworks that have been removed. This work intends to not be perceived itself so much as to represent the removed expressions that support it.

Daniel Buren 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. Gerber

has painted his *Support* directly on top of a section of Buren's striped motif from his work *Crossing through the Colors*, which was realized in Chicago in 2006; such fragments of Buren's works are referred to as souvenirs. In this way, Gerber foregrounds his *Support* against the Buren souvenir. This emphasizes the *Support* as expression as well as ground, and emphasizes the souvenir as both an object and, more importantly in this situation, as a context for Gerber's expression. It is central to Buren's practice that his work acts as the ground against which other expressions are perceived. This idea is one of the starting points for Gerber's practice, and his gesture in *Support* acknowledges the exchange between both artists' practices based on their shared interest in acknowledging the necessity of a ground for perception to occur.

Gaylen Gerber has exhibited widely. Recent solo exhibitions and cooperative projects include: The Musee d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg, Luxembourg; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois; and the FRAC-Bourgogne and Musee des Beaux-Arts, Dijon, France.