

JEAN BAPTISTE BERNADET

Who, What, Where, When, Why, How, 2012



TORRI is proud to present a solo show of works by Jean-Baptiste Bernadet for its first participation in Art Rotterdam, from February 8 to 12, 2012.

Through transfer, duplication, accumulation, erasure and appropriation, **Jean-Baptiste Bernadet** multiplies speculative definitions of painting, tracing a subjective, non-linear narrative of his engagement with the medium. These multiple attempts are recorded in every painted mark, but also recounted in every exhibition, each proposing an alternate way of reading the work.

For Art Rotterdam 2012, Jean-Baptiste Bernadet shows an installation comprised of five paintings entitled ***Who, What, Where, When, Why, How***. For journalists, police investigators and researchers, the “five W’s (and one H)” are a basic information-gathering tool, a simple way of getting the full “story” on any subject. Since none of these questions can be answered with a simple yes or no, each question elicits a factual response.

Each painting in the installation offers a response to one of these questions. But their slippery, almost liquid, surfaces, repetitive palettes and mechanical but disorderly marks, that seem halfway between appearing and disappearing, suggest that the artist is more interested in letting these questions linger in the air than in offering concrete responses. Deliberately leaving the “why” aside – the most subjective question on the list – the artist evokes our incapacity to understand our world and the extent to which this incomprehension leaves us vulnerable.

Questions and answers remain completely open, indicating the artist's desire to express the inexpressible, echoing the pre-Romantic notion of the sublime so often evoked by painters. Raphael Rubinstein calls this contemporary translation of the sublime “provisional painting” (“Provisional Painting”, *Art in America*, May 2009), seeing in its unfinished, incomplete, accidental, fragile and unstable aspects an expression of “the impossibility of painting and the equally persistent impossibility of not painting.” Despite heterogeneous strategies, provisional painters, with whom Jean-Baptiste Bernadet could be grouped, share “a profound willingness to suspend closure, to leave painting open,” to “outplay the paradigm of their medium, and continually baffle it.”

Born in Paris in 1978, Jean-Baptiste Bernadet is a Brussel-based artist since 2000. He’s graduated from Ecole Supérieure d’Art de Rennes (FR) and from La Cambre (Brussel). He was artist in residency at Chinati Foundation, Marfa in Texas in 2010, and in APT Studios in Brooklyn, in 2011.

In recent years, he has participated in several exhibitions, like White Flags, Saint Louis (USA), TORRI, Paris, Renwick gallery, NYC (2011), Chinati Foundation, Marfa (2010), WIELS, Brussel (2009, 2010), Galerie Xprssns, Hamburg (2008), Konsortium, Dusseldorf (2007).