

PRESS RELEASE

RICHARD ALDRICH

“Once I Was...”

Exhibition dates: 15 September – 29 October 2011

Bortolami is pleased to present Richard Aldrich's second solo show at the gallery.

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In the studio they were made individually, with their own logic and circumstances, but here as they are presented they become more of a symbolic gesture.

This manner of presenting an importance or objective, but in the same swoop tearing it apart in a way that questions the motivation of that initial importance (deterritorialization), which becomes almost a red herring in its surface-ness.

I always think of the paintings as a prop in the sense of their own interior specificity in relation to an outward meaning or function, which, to me, is one of incongruence. The defined logic of the painting's individuality bears little resemblance nor has much effect on the way in which the painting functions in the larger whole. I liked this because the painting becomes wholly specific but also random and so doesn't bear the weight that an object usually would.

In this way the prop's allowance of or sort of attention to detail is one of proliferation, that is not confined to fulfill a function and thus able to shoot off into any sort of direction or whim. And by function I am not referring to a political, social, or economic function, but rather the role that the artwork plays in creating a meaning.

With Bresson he talks about the actors (which he calls models) learning lines and saying them 50 times. He is interested in the way that, paradoxically, the lines lose all their meaning, becoming a rote process, but in this space there is allowed a way for the model to create a more intimate reaction or gesture— a blink or look off to a direction that becomes a real part of themselves as a person as opposed to themselves as an actor.

This contradiction is something that resonates for me in my understanding of painting and my own work. This kind of contradictory existence of something that is almost embarrassingly blatant yet then turns around into something new altogether.

These paintings are meant to become props in an ongoing production that aims to present a series of systems that interact with one and other. They are not metaphor, nor allegory, but prop. The objects created are specific in themselves, but that specificity is not pertinent to the workings, that is the form of the interactions that can take place, of the systems. These systems are not about a balance or a thought, a final idea or an idealized end, nor a perceived direction, but rather a body in which things are happening— aesthetic things, slow things, long drawn out jokes, sad truths. What is important is that the work sets up a sort of stage in which the viewer is responsible for navigating themselves around. The paintings are presented, but they become these mirrors that flip back and forth between reflecting myself and reflecting the viewer.

How meaning is created becomes through contradiction and re-alignment.

Richard Aldrich, 2007

Richard Aldrich was born in 1975 in Hampton, Virginia. Aldrich has an upcoming solo exhibition in November at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art curated by Gary Garrels. Recent exhibitions include “Richard

Aldrich and the 19th Century French Painting”, a solo presentation at Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, Missouri (2011); “Rational Abstraction” at Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea in Santiago de Compostela, Spain (2011); “Time Again” at the Sculpture Center in New York (2011); and the 2010 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.