

Meyer Riegger

Robert Janitz
Oriental Lumber
Sept 17–Oct 10, 2014

Oriental Lumber is the name of a hardware and lumber store in Bushwick, Brooklyn that Robert Janitz visits regularly in search of the material used in his work. Taking the shop's name as its title, this exhibition at Meyer Riegger features a pair of custom-made Nike basketball shoes designed by the artist that he wears himself—the invite features a photograph showing the artist sporting the shoes.¹

¹ Galerie Meyer Riegger is pleased to present their first solo show of the New York-based artist Robert Janitz. This is also Janitz' first solo show in Germany. Before moving to the U.S., the artist lived and worked for many years in Paris.

In the painting and sculptural work of Robert Janitz (born in 1962), surfaces are membranes of memory and description. It is the space of the paint itself that Janitz explores in his painting, giving it haptic form. He generates his paint using wax, flour, and oils, using it on primarily large canvases to create volumes and extend it as a mass into sculptural space—on the painting surface just as in his sculptural paintings. Janitz thinks of the surface and its continuing development as a site. It develops concrete structures and makes the structural its object, a space, and not least a metaphor of painting itself in the midst of his abstract painting. Janitz' broad surfaces and almost crude brushstrokes are thus condensed gestures of the lived and the coming, they are movements that do not exist as a figure or an object. They are the gesture of their motion itself.

His small format portraits take up this gesture. They show emerging, yet hidden faces in rear or side views. They show moments that are not ready to be shown. They form allusions, references, to situations, images, to the sensual that embraces us without concrete form and visualization.

The oxymoron that Robert Janitz develops between image and language, between the painted and the titles of his works has something of a similar gesture to it. Passages of text or concepts from literature, the theater, poetry, or everyday life encounter his painting like hashtags that set situational points of departure and still leave the narration of the image to itself. Janitz uses words as forms and his forms in turn develop a language that refuses the grammar of order. Texture becomes a location that narrates, just like texts that describe locations. Abstract and conceptual, they represent footnotes that refer as an intermediate form to thoughts and situations, to links and inspiration. This one is called "Oriental Lumber."

Text: Christina Irrgang, trans. Brian Currid/Zweisprachkunst

