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D E L A V A L L A D E

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JOE REIHSEN
BEING THE SEEING

May 28 - June 21, 2016

Praz-Delavallade is pleased to present Los Angeles based artist Joe Reihsen's first solo exhibition in France.

Reihsen's paintings are characterized by optical illusions, and vigorous and determined overlays of polymers that often exceed every possible limit of the surface. Over the years he has constructed a body of works that is both materially determined and metaphorically romantic, a body of works that bears the tension of a physical universe that is highly permeated with digital realities.

The titles for the works in this exhibition borrow text from guided mindfulness meditation recordings. This naming device is in contrast to previous exhibitions, which featured text from the 'missed connections' section on Craigslist. Both of these fields occupy important positions within our contemporary condition of connectedness. The 'missed connections' listings present themselves as a barometer for the alienation and new intimacy brought about since the rise of the Internet.

On the other end of the spectrum, the field of meditation has seen a reemergence recently, regarded now as a field of science and medicine, in addition to spirituality. Our hearts are now tired of the Internet; which has urged the artist to explore this tendency for many people to come back to their bodies and their roots, in the present. These new paintings continue to explore the notions of the skin that were present in Reihsen's previous works, using the surface of the paintings as a means of placing the body within the space, literally and symbolically. Such as, figurative works without the body in which some striations and patterns present in the paintings evoke muscle fibers, cells, or hair.

With its crisp flat finishes, and trompe l'oeil depictions of impasto and brushstrokes, Reihsen creates panels that are entrenched in the historical language of abstract painting, while also exerting a clear relationship to contemporary digital culture. Like the ubiquitous digital screen, all of Reihsen's panels contain a profound sense of physical depth while remaining almost entirely flat.

Reihsen belongs to a generation of painters that naturally integrated digital tools into their art while still being in high school in the 90s. Up until today, he would use computer terms to describe his process, where he would "copy and paste, distort, warp and rotate", only to end up "scaling up" or "scaling down". In the end however, he is a master of texture and surface, seemingly at odds with flat screens and pixels, whose works continually gain admiration and constant intrigue. The twin elements of digital maven and manual laborer are what define Reihsen both as a person and as an artist. As put by Ed Schad, "the most urgent question of his painting is whether these two worlds ultimately have to be at odds or whether he can find a vocabulary that dissolves the split entirely." (Modern Painters, June 2014)

Joe Reihsen (b. 1979. Blaine, Minnesota) lives and works in Los Angeles. Joe received his BFA in painting and New Genres at the San Francisco Art Institute. In 2008, Joe received an MFA from the University of California, Santa Barbara where he was awarded the UC Regents Fellowship.