

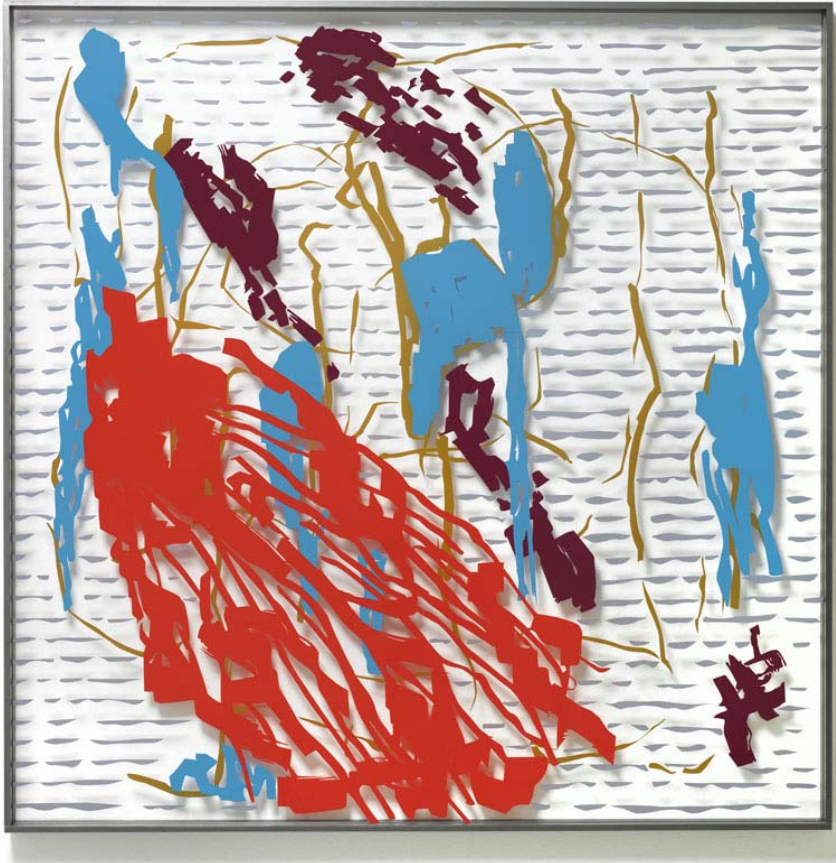
GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

JEAN-MARC BUSTAMANTE

SQUARE PAINTINGS

January 10 – February 25, 2012

Opening on Tuesday, January 10th from 7pm to 9pm



Cardinal, 2010 (Ink on Plexiglas with steel frame. 150 x 150 cm)

PRESS RELEASE

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works on square screen-reprinted Plexiglas by French artist, Jean-Marc Bustamante.

This new body of work, titled *Colorito-Colorado*, refers to the Renaissance era during which the determining characteristic of the Venetian school was colour, rather than drawing. Unlike *disegno* [drawing], which Florentine artists regarded as the key to depicting nature, Venetian artists preferred to achieve form by applying the paint directly in layers – thus, in a way, anticipating the Impressionists.

This series demonstrates Bustamante's endeavour to gain an understanding of colour-painting. The explosion of colour on Plexiglas originates in expansive drawing or applying large strokes and patches of colour with felt pen on graph paper. The drawing is transformed and simplified through computer-processing, which removes everything that records the temporality of the action – the contact of the brush-strokes, the layering of the paint, the movements of the artist's hand. Far removed from any relation to traditional techniques, this is a new kind of painting,

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reminiscent of the brightly coloured images we are used to seeing on our computer or iPad screen. As the artist expresses it, we gain "spirit", lightness, simplicity – and probably also speed and fluency of perception.

The image thus produced is transformed into a large screen-printed Plexiglas picture. The use of industrial processes has been a constant factor in Bustamante's work over the past three decades; it began with photography, continued with sculpture and finally led in the '90s to *Lumières*, his first works on Plexiglas.

This industrial aesthetic, so important to Bustamante, was inherited from painters such as Franz Kline, Frank Stella and Andy Warhol; now that we are surrounded with technical equipment in everyday life, it assumes quite a different significance. It also shows the interest of artists for technology (i.e. Albert Oehlen's ink-jet works, or David Hockney's iPhone paintings).

In his approach to painting, the artist no longer leaves the Plexiglas free-floating on the wall held by four metal brackets, but places the picture in a steel frame, giving it the appearance of a window full of colour and transparency. The white wall illuminates the painting, at the same time excluding the possibility of conveying depth or infinity.

Interestingly enough, this glass box is reminiscent of a large-format camera, and thus recalls the artist's earlier works. Although the lens is a leitmotiv throughout Bustamante's work, this series aims at a new kind of painting and at a new way of looking at pictures.

Bustamante lives and works in Paris. He participated in Documentas 8, 9 and 10, and designed the French pavilion at the 2003 Venice Biennale.

Jean-Marc Bustamante has an important solo exhibition opening on February 5, 2012 at the Villa Medici in Rome (running until May 6, 2012). A catalogue will be published on the occasion, with texts by Eric de Chasse, Director of the Académie de France in Rome - Villa Medici and Jean-Marc Bustamante.

*For all inquiries regarding this exhibition, please contact Bénédicte Burrus: benedicte@ropac.net.
For all press and visual materials, please contact Alessandra Bellavita: alessandra@ropac.net.*