

Petzel

Strategic Vandalism: The Legacy of Asger Jorn's Modification Paintings

March 5 – April 13, 2019

Opening Reception: Tuesday, March 5th, 6–8pm
456 West 18th Street

Curated by Axel Heil and Roberto Ohrt

If you have old paintings, do not despair. Retain your memories but detourn them so that they correspond with your era. Why reject the old, if one can modernize it? —Asger Jorn

Petzel is pleased to announce *Strategic Vandalism: The Legacy of Asger Jorn's Modification Paintings*. Situated in the context of the first thrift store paintings altered by Danish artist Asger Jorn, this group show of over 30 prominent international artists investigates multifarious appropriation methods spanning from the mid-1960s to the flourishing techniques of the 1980s, up to the present day.

But flashback to Paris, 1959: Asger Jorn exhibits a group of paintings at the prominent Galerie Rive Gauche. Not only has he re-worked these found paintings with his own brush, modifying their respective surfaces, but he also writes a text describing his technique as a recovery of certain iconographic archetypes. Instead of making a mockery of these kitsch paintings, he articulates some of their inherent folk-art values. The exhibition is not well received. However, it has since become legendary. Jorn's modifications have long been a neglected chapter in the Danish artist's biography. Yet from today's perspective these high/low hermaphrodites are recognized by keen-eyed viewers as mirrors reflecting the historicity of modern painting.

Such "Modifications" are a painterly version of "détournement," a Situationist technique, described in 1956 by Guy Debord and Gil Wolman as the systematic revaluation of "prefabricated aesthetic products." For Jorn, who co-founded and financially supported the Situationist International, the 1959 Galerie Rive Gauche exhibition, showcased his implementation of a fundamental aesthetic critique in which he appropriates a relatively discredited artistic source as "his" own material, then applies *his* iconography, and *his* language to that particular prefabricated model.

Strategic Vandalism: The Legacy of Asger Jorn's Modification Paintings features works by **Enrico Baj, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Vidya Gastaldon, Wade Guyton/Stephen Prina, Rachel Harrison, Ray Johnson, Jacqueline de Jong, Asger Jorn, Mike Kelley, Martin Kippenberger, Per Kirkeby, Lee Krasner, Albert Oehlen, Francis Picabia, Stephen Prina, R.H. Quaytman, Arnulf Rainer, Julian Schnabel, Jim Shaw, Gedi Sibony, Alexis Smith, Daniel Spoerri, John Stezaker, Betty Tompkins, and David Wojnarowicz.**

A comprehensive book on *Strategic Vandalism: The Legacy of Asger Jorn's Modification Paintings* is forthcoming with texts written and edited by the curators as well as reprinted articles on the subjects of détournement, vandalism, and the relationship between modifications and appropriation art in the late 1970s.

Petzel Gallery is located at 456 West 18th Street New York, NY 10011. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM–6:00 PM. For press inquires, please contact Ricky Lee at ricky@petzel.com, or call (212) 680-9467.