

MICHAEL ZAHN

as *Michael Zahn*

May 29 – July 3, 2008 | 11 Rivington St, NY

Eleven Rivington is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Brooklyn-based artist Michael Zahn on view from May 29th to July 3rd. As Michael Zahn is the artist's first solo exhibition in New York and his first exhibition with the gallery.

The work at Eleven Rivington presents a picture of an exhibition as an immersive domain and mediates the various networks in which contemporary painting is enmeshed. These networks include the artist's studio, the gallery, domestic interiors, and common spaces. The artist's aesthetic language of hard-edge abstraction is used as a default and is informed by familiar spatio-temporal frameworks from digital environments such as computer desktops, banking interfaces, and video games that ground Zahn's works in the present.

Following Blinky Palermo's *Fenster I* (1970), *Hang* is a large two-panel painting that covers the gallery's east wall and evokes the north windows of Eleven Rivington's storefront. Its formal elements also reference glitches, images, or components that have not fully loaded onto a computer screen. A machine is 'hung' if it doesn't respond to input from a keyboard or a mouse and must be restarted to proceed. With *Hang*, Zahn acknowledges the alleged failure of heroic abstract painting while humorously attempting to reboot its program. Another continuum between exterior and interior is present in *Cutting Off The Digits (Floor Function)*, a group of trompe l'oeil cardboard boxes, containers typically used to transport objects or store information. Rendered in a crisp, flat hand, the boxes may also be seen as the equivalent of three-dimensional pixels in their standard, uniform articulation of generalized space.

The south wall of the gallery points to a potential destination of the work once it leaves the studio. The wall itself is painted in a wry approximation of a neoclassical interior and acknowledges one possible role of painting: to serve as decoration or ornament within a domestic space. The centerpiece of this *mise-en-scene*, *Power, Corruption, and Lies (Version)* is a scaled-up, low-resolution copy of the New Order LP sleeve of the same name, which in turn is derived from a floral still-life by Henri Fantin-Latour. Smaller paintings are also displayed salon-style, including the pixelated *Self-Image*, a cropped, magnified monochrome that may or may not be seen as representing a single blossom.

The gallery's west wall features *Generalizations of the Pigeonhole Principle*, which portrays the practice of painting as a set of provisional material referents and implicates the viewer in the creative act. During the course of the exhibition, color swatches affixed to the three "blank" canvases will be replaced with alternating swatches while a vase of living flowers at the center of the work marks the passage of time and imbues the arrangement with a sense of transparency. The black painting *Stellar (Version)*, with its string of luminous green asterisks, establishes a cryptic identity, and may be seen in this context as an abstract signature.

Michael Zahn was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1963 and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Previous solo exhibitions include Michael Zahn at Galerie Ruzicska, Salzburg, Austria (2005) and *This, That, and The Other* at Minus Space Project Room, Brooklyn, NY (2007). Recent group exhibitions include *Late Liberties* at John Connelly Presents (2007), *Machine Learning* at The Painting Center (2007), and *Rundumschlag* at Galerie Ruzicska (2006). Zahn's works are included in the *Sammlung Daimler* in Stuttgart and Berlin, and traveled in the exhibition *Outside Europe*, seen at the Galerie der Stadt in Sindelfingen and the Stadtsgalerie in Kiel (2006). In September 2008, Zahn's work will be included in *Minus Space*, a survey of reductive and postminimal work curated by Phong Bui at PS 1 in Queens, NY.