

Serge Aboukrat and Philippe Jousse present Bertrand Lavier - The imaginary Walt Disney museum

Preview thursday 12th october 2017 - Friday 13th october - Saturday 18th november 2017



«Visite meublée»
Photographies

Bertrand Lavier's furniture paintings

Bertrand Lavier has always played wittily and demandingly with the registrations and formal contrasts which structure the art world. He has consistently blurred the boundaries between painting and sculpture, and sculpture and objects. The show at the Jousse gallery, proposed and diligently organized by Serge Aboukrat and Philippe Jousse, makes an additional turn of the screw by ostensibly confronting sculpture and furniture. Pieces of furniture designed by Prouvé, Paulin and Le Corbusier are thus compared with the Walt Disney Productions series which Bertrand Lavier started work on in 1984. This series is based quite literally on a Walt Disney comic strip published in the *Journal de Mickey* under the French title of *Traits très abstraits*, which describes the adventures of Minnie and Mickey in the Museum of Modern Art. By isolating the paintings and sculptures which form the narrative's décor, and by then enlarging them to the format here adopted, Lavier achieves a short circuit, letting what was hitherto just décor and fiction have access to the status of works.

The photographic paintings and the sculptures produced on the basis of this comic strip henceforth roam within an undecidable space, holding on to the form of their original territory, while having left it. In this sense, Walt Disney Productions does not represent the ironical commentary of modern art as told to children, but reminds us, as the artist observes, that "it is the virtual world which enables us to approach reality in greater depth".

By including this series in an exhibition of furniture symbolizing modernity, Bertrand Lavier creates a distortion in the relation between object and décor. Ever since Matisse, the relations between background and figure have permanently haunted western painting. No matter how sublime abstract painting claims to be, it is also part and parcel of a form of décor (didn't the aesthetic avant-gardes of the early 20th century want to do away with the boundaries between art and life?) What is it, today, that makes a distinction between a minimal sculpture and a piece of furniture? What is it that enables us to tell a minimal painting apart from wallpaper?

What creates décor? What acts as a box or foil? Bertrand Lavier's photographs or the furniture on view?

Photographs are artefacts, items of furniture are "real objects". But the comparison of these two data pushes these objects over into the realm of fiction and these photographs into the realm of verisimilitude. Furniture painting, as dreamed of by Marcel Duchamp for the works of his daughter Yo Savy, a wink at Erik Satie's furniture music (*Carrelage phonique* and *Tapiserie en fer forge*, 1917) here finds a funny form of fulfilment.

Bernard Marcadé

jousseentreprise