

# MASSIMODECARLO

HIER, OGGI

BERTRAND LAVIER

Massimo De Carlo gallery is pleased to present *Hier, Oggi* a solo exhibition by the French artist Bertrand Lavier, with whom Massimo De Carlo has collaborated since the early nineties.

Bertrand Lavier is renowned in the realm of contemporary art for his reflections on abstract painting and sculpture. Through light-hearted humour and sarcasm Lavier has reworked the notion of the canvas and moreover of the art work in general via juxtapositions and hybridizations, creations that are generated by his thoughts on consumerism and authorship, which are rooted in his first handed experience of the tumultuous riots in Paris in 1968.

Gesture is key in Bertrand Lavier's oeuvre, where the pictorial element defines the content and the context. The exhibition *Hier, Oggi* is structured as a retrospective - deliberately incomplete and fragmentary - where the artist has selected a number of works from different periods of career, focusing on the period that goes from 1983 to today. Mirrors and canvases specifically made for the exhibition are shown alongside works from the early eighties.

In the first room of the gallery, a chromatic juxtaposition defines the instalment of older works on one side and more recent works on the other. A series of flaming red coloured large-scale canvases, created for this exhibition, testify Lavier's on-going interest in the exploration of colour and the experience of abstraction. Bertrand Lavier refuses the idea that there is a language that can be thought of as universal, an idea that stems from the theoretical dogmas of conceptual art. For the artist reality itself rebukes the language that attempts to define it: the word red for example does not coincide with a precise reality, but with at least two colours, as Bertrand makes tangible in the work *Vermillon par Golden, Pêbêo et Bertrand Lavier* (2018).

The investigation of the notion of industry, consumerism and imagery reproduction is key in the narrative that surrounds Lavier's relationship with arts and objects. This on-going research by the artist becomes clear in the second part of the room. Works from the early eighties, nineties and noughties such as *Formica Red* (1983); *Timex* (1987); *Charles Eames Chair* (2002) e *SMEG* (2002) are iconic examples of Bertrand Lavier's ability to morph object-hood through the painterly gesture, challenging and experimenting the Duchampian concept of Ready Made. In the same fashion *Peinture Blanche et Dorée N°3* is caught in between being half abstract painting half painted object.

The complex and eclectic universe of Bertrand Lavier is based on the continuous exploration of the boundaries between painting and sculpture, photography and painting, reality and imagination, language and object, the copy and the original. In *Colonne Lancia* (2017) a stone column is engraved with the headlight of a Lancia car, hinting to Bertrand's interest in botanical studies and challenging the notions and meanings of historical objects and objet trouvé. The same investigation of hybridization can be found in the combinations of house hold objects such as the sculpture *Husqvarna / Art Déco N°1* (2012): in this work, the two objects, that are incredibly different one from another and belong to different decades fluctuate one on top of the other without ever touching each other evoking what Lavier calls the 'failure of the ready made'.

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In the second room of the gallery, Bertrand Lavier has chosen to address the notion of time, key in the narrative of the exhibition, by selecting a series of his renowned Mirror Paintings. The artist covers each mirror with either coloured paint or a particular type of thick transparent paint: the artist blurs out our reflection, exiting normality and inviting us into a dazed and ethereal dimension. On this occasion the artist has chosen three different styles of frames (baroque, art déco and contemporary) to sign the passage of time in our lives and in history of art.

Bertrand Lavier is a persistent explorer of reality: through his artworks he challenges and questions the notion of the identity of the artist, and the relationship between the artist's ego and the rest of the world, each work is a sardonic dare towards the insufferable codes and rules of the art system and of contemporary culture.

### BERTRAND LAVIER

Bertrand Lavier was born in Châtillon-sur-Seine in 1949. Works and lives in Aignay-le-Duc and Paris. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Walt Disney Productions*, Kunstmuseum, Luzern, CH (2017); *Bertrand Lavier*, curated by Friedmann Malsch, Kunstmuseum, Liechtenstein, Vaduz (2016); *Merci Raymond par Bertrand Lavier*, Monnaie de Paris, Paris, F (2016); *La Vénus d'Amiens*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, F (2016); *L'Affaire Tournesols*, Fondation Vincent Van Gogh, Arles, F (2015); *Bertrand Lavier - Retrospective*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, F (2012); *Bertrand Lavier*, Musée Hermes, Seoul, Korea (2010); *Bertrand Lavier*, Villa Medici, Rome, I (2009); *Correspondances. Bertrand Lavier/ Edouard Manet*, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, F (2008). Bertrand Lavier's work is included in collective exhibitions in prestigious venues such as: Le Consortium, Dijon, F (2017); Villa Arson, Nice, F (2017); Grand Palais, Paris, F (2015); Punta della Dogana, François Pinault Foundation, Venice, I (2015); Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, F (2015); Monnaie de Paris, Paris, F (2015); Palazzo Grassi, Venice, I (2014, 2012); Palais de Tokyo, Paris, F (2011); The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia (2010).

#### **Hard Facts:**

Massimo De Carlo, Milan

Via Giovanni Ventura, 5 - 20134 Milan, Italy

From 12th of April 2018 until the June 23rd 2018

Opening reception on Wednesday 11th of April, from 18:00 to 21:00

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 11:00 – 19:00

#### **For further information and materials:**

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