

VALLOIS

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33

rue de Seine

PIERRE SEINTURIER

**CHER MONSIEUR
PEINTURIER**

12.01 - 24.02.2024

OPENING

Thursday
January 11
6 PM - 9 PM

**NEW YORK
UPCOMING**

Jacques Villeglé

28.01 - 30.04.2024

At the end of the 1960s, art in California (a history still written in the masculine) was dominated by two distinct and opposing trends: Light and Space - minimalism and reduction to the essential by Robert Irwin - and assemblage - installation and maximalism at the Ferus Gallery which was founded by Walter Hopps and Edward Kienholz. On the fringes of this two-lane highway, isolated temperaments gradually emerged, tackling the limits of art's mediums and questioning this duality: Bas Jan Ader, Michael Asher, John Baldessari, Guy de Cointet, David Lamelas and Richard Jackson.

Born in Sacramento in 1939 under the sign of Leo, Richard Jackson says he grew up with tools not books and claims to have been influenced by Abstract Expressionism and Jackson Pollock's action painting, cathartically pushing his homage to the New York painter to extremes - even to the obscene - by flooding the surface of his installations with paint. Thanks to his radical use of colour (splashing, squirting, spraying and shooting), his work has been compared to an outrageous version of Yves Klein and Niki de Saint Phalle's nouveau réalisme. With his action painting and his painting machines, made from scratch and equipped with pipes spitting out eruptions of colour, Richard Jackson is above all the missing link between the Viennese Actionists and his American contemporaries Paul McCarthy and Bruce Nauman. He was also one of a host among Californian artists (Chris Burden, Mike Kelley, Raymond Pettibon, Charles Ray) and writers (Charles Bukowsky, Dennis Cooper) involved in MOCA's cult exhibition, the grotesque and macabre Helter Skelter (1992) dedicated to the disruptive forms of 1990s LA in which he was a maverick, remembering how the public had to lean against his installation to better appreciate Kelley's work...



Stacked Paintings (detail)

What does this matter in the light of his three clown self-portraits, presented in his sixth exhibition at the Galerie GP&N Vallois, ready to spit paint in the face of this same public? Or his four cherubs inspired by Manneken Pis, who will, for their part, urinate paint as they mark out their territory in the literal sense, reclaiming the space of art while profaning it! Because "art is dedicated to dubious and inappropriate behaviour" according to the definition of someone who "wants to make you feel uncomfortable" as the Californian Times described the agent provocateur exactly ten years ago. With regard to Richard Jackson's act/action of painting in the Stacked Paintings (which first appeared in 1980), we can now confirm that painting is not used as a means of image representation or creation and an object for aesthetic contemplation. Instead it is a coloured liquid applied to canvas for its sculptural qualities, it is stacked canvases for their potential to be both conceptual and subversive, and above all as a monumental experience to be explored. Or perhaps it is just a question of "making paintings more exciting than looking at some flat thing on the wall".

Tristan Bera

¹ "My definition of art is unusual behaviour. Art is a place for people that don't fit in." Quote by Richard Jackson in "Meet the Artist: Richard Jackson", film directed by Derek Klein. All rights reserved © 2016 Museum of Glass.

² Jori Finkel, "Richard Jackson wants to make you feel uncomfortable," in *The Los Angeles Times*, 15 February 2013.

³ "What I'm trying to do is to extend or make paintings more exciting than looking at some flat thing on the wall," Richard Jackson in conversation with Dennis Szakacs for the exhibition "Richard Jackson. Ain't Painting A Pain" (S.M.A.K. Stedelijk Museum Voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium, 2014), Hauser & Wirth London, 24 May 2014.



Duck Tank 1 (detail)