

PAUL WACKERS

Of Life

December 16, 2011 – January 28, 2012

Opening Reception:
Friday, December 16, 6 - 8pm

Gallery Hours:
Tuesday – Saturday 10 - 6pm



Paul Wackers creates paintings that are rooted in the modernist tradition while simultaneously subverting this same history. As a devotee of 20th century European avant-garde painting, Wackers has spent long hours deciphering and deconstructing the manner in which artists like Matisse, Braque and Picasso have committed three dimensional forms into paintings. Much of his output to this day can be viewed as an exercise in dynamic depiction. Wackers is inspired by objects in the everyday world and reconciles and reorganizes them into new and bold configurations. Wackers paintings are universal, yet clearly recognizable by his signature style which melds abstraction and figuration. As the artist states, "My work is first a response to the world and then a reaction to what it has to offer."

In his new body of work Wackers shifts his focus toward interiors, while maintaining the power and expansiveness seen in his exterior landscapes. In several paintings he takes on quiet still lifes - flower arrangements and objects d'art - and activates them through his use of bold color choices, unconventional and varied paint handling, and compositional abstraction.

In his painting, "Primary Element", Wackers depicts a structure whose movement, color and immensity are reined in by the simple grey platform on which the structure sits. Akin to the minimalists and post-modernists before him, Wackers addresses the complexities of the viewing space by placing his primary element on a pedestal. It is this juxtaposition of the raw or earthly with the seeming rigidity of the institution that Wackers so brilliantly captures in this pivotal piece.

In the work, "A Leading Question", the viewer is presented with a dense scene of palm fronds and tangled pennant flag lines in a type of "post hurricane" vignette of a beachfront vacation landscape. Rising and curling in a twisting loop is a dark brown spray painted lasso that cuts through the lower center of the work. Viewers familiar with Wackers' paintings will recognize the use of the spray painted line as a recurring trope that signifies a break with naturalistic depiction. Essentially, with the spray painted loop Wackers is stating to the viewer that they have entered the artificial world of painting, where perception is purposely warped by the artist who controls space and time. In Wackers case we enjoy this artificial new world because it is at once familiar, and yet entirely original.

This is Paul Wackers first exhibition at Morgan Lehman Gallery. He was born in 1978 in New Haven, Ct. He received a BFA (2001) at Corcoran College of Art and Design, Washington D.C. and an MFA (2004) at San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA. He has had solo exhibitions in Brussels (forthcoming), New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington D.C.

For more information, please visit morganlehmgallery.com, or contact the gallery at 212.268.6699.