

GALERIE ANNIE GENTILS

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WANDER

Andrew Webb

09/05/14 – 28/06/2014

Opening on Thursday May 8th at 6 PM

Opening hours: Wednesday through Saturday 2 -6 PM and by appointment

Closed during The Solo Project Basel (16.06 – 23.06)

The Annie Gentils Gallery is pleased to announce the sixth solo exhibition at the gallery by Andrew Webb; “WANDER”.

I CAN SEE WONDERFUL THINGS

Perhaps with the titles to some of his past exhibitions at the Annie Gentils Gallery in mind - ‘Not Not’, 2008, ‘Not Webb’, 2011 - asked why for this current show the artist has predominantly made a return to painting, Webb replied; “Why Not?”

In an age where it seems that anything can be considered Art through the manipulation of public consensus, maybe he has decided, for the moment at least, to concentrate his work on something which definitely is Art: the painting.

The title of the exhibition; “WANDER” is taken from a passage in the diary of the swiss painter Paul Klee (Munich, 1900): “Childhood was a dream , someday all would be accomplished. The period of learning, a time for searching into everything, into the smallest, into the most hidden, into the good and the bad. Then a light is lit somewhere, and a single direction is followed (that stage I now enter; let us call it the time of wandering).” A strange statement considering the definition of the word ‘wander’; to go about from place to place without any fixed course or destination; aimless roaming. This suggests much more of an ‘opening-up’ than something towards closure.

The majority of the pieces in this exhibition are what the Artist refers to as ‘pure’ painting - quite simply paintings that are devoid of any collaged elements.

Where we do see the use of ‘objects’, ie; the comb, the hat, these point to the head, the cerebral, as of course does the endless wordplay in the naming of the works. Even, the overall title of the exhibition turns out to be an anagramme of the Artist’s name.

An important feature of Webb’s work has always been a concern for the transhistorical nature of certain forms of ‘signing’. In “Signature Work #1” and “Signature Work #2”, 2012, the Artist’s name is also represented by his initials; AW (*also the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end*). The form of the letters in these works and others are taken from photographs of graffiti from around the world. This form of ancient and primitive imagery has long been referenced in art history. Twentieth century examples include “Nous Nous Cajolions”, 1943 by Marcel Duchamp and “We Two Boys Together Clinging”, 1961 by David Hockney. In the case of Webb’s own work they appear in “Eyesore”, 2013, which in its turn negates an earlier conceptual work from the 1990s and again in “113”, 2014, where the ‘A’ alone, half formed and in pairs, is superimposed onto a blueprint of the house where the Artist was born.

The hand print, another example of arcane, two dimensional representation, is used by Webb in “Hand Made Virgin / Man Having Dried”, 2014.

Here the anagrammatical title is reflected autonomously in the work, the Artist’s hand prints having been painted by the Artist’s hand itself.

A similar reiterative device is deployed by Webb in the work “And Per Se And”, 2013; “Per Se” meaning ‘through itself’, ‘by itself’, ‘in itself’. In this case it is clearly the autonomy of works of Art in general and of paintings in particular that is at stake: the painting as “the thing itself”. The name of the symbol depicted in the painting is an Ampersand, originally from ancient Roman script and refined to its present form during the Renaissance. Ampersand is a corruption of the phrase; “and (& per se and” meaning “and (the symbol &) intrinsically (is the word) and”. The symbol is repeated nine times in the work on a grid and when read verbally the Artist says he is reminded of the sound of a moving train.

Possibly the oldest three dimensional imagery is the hole. (Is a three dimensional representation of a hole actually a hole and therefor not a representation?) In “Apropos of An Angelic Alphabet”, 2014, twenty six holes are painted, in two dimensions, their unique shapes arrived at by burning real holes in a sheet of cardboard. Holes are also depicted in more hand prints in “Holy See”, 2014; perhaps Christ’s wounds. And it was through a small hole in a door in 1927, that Howard Carter peered and declared; “I can see wonderful things”.