

RH GALLERY

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Wolfgang Ellenrieder: Time Is Out of Joint

March 5 – May 7, 2011

RH Gallery is pleased to present Wolfgang Ellenrieder's debut solo exhibition in the US. This exhibition will coincide with the US launch of Prestel's new book of Ellenrieder's work titled *Tatort*, or "Crime Scene." Ellenrieder is also currently included in *Unscharf*, a group exhibition featuring Gerhard Richter and Ugo Rondinone, on view until 22 May 2011 at the Hamburg Kunsthalle. Ellenrieder currently lives in Munich where he was born in 1959.

Ellenrieder's oeuvre explores image construction and representation. His focus lies in the process of image-making itself and the viewer's perception of images. He studies the function of the images such as media as well as personal photographs that inundate our daily life. The crux of Ellenrieder's work engages representation and simultaneous misrepresentation of reality.

Stock photography is particularly important in his catastrophe paintings, which depict fires and their destruction of different environments, several of which are included in this exhibition. That a stock photograph from a fire in Athens could later illustrate stories of other catastrophic events in different areas of the world fascinates Ellenrieder. The recycling of photographs in the media demonstrates their lack of specificity - the less a photograph refers to a concrete place and time, the more stories it can illustrate. This idea, the dislocating of time and space through visual representation, is reflected in Ellenrieder's paintings.

The starting point for Ellenrieder is always a particular atmosphere or feeling and the subject becomes its discovery. His process is dependent on each individual image, and involves sourcing and manipulating photographs, video and architectural models that he finds or creates. He then often uses these components to render a schematic for a composition which changes and evolves as it is translated into a painting.

Ellenrieder's studio is divided into two parts: one part is a library of sources and a computer for processing them; the second part is a kind of laboratory. In the laboratory, he creates brushes and a variety of tools for applying paint from airbrush nozzles to reconfigured brooms. Here, he also makes his own paints from raw pigments and a variety of binders that he mixes to change everything from a paint's viscosity to its gloss. His palette consists mostly of subtle shades of brown, blue, yellow, orange, grey, purple and pink. Ellenrieder prepares his canvases with rabbit-skin glue and chalk primer so the surface initially remains absorbent. His process itself is then documented in the painting and becomes a subject of the work. The final painting retains vestiges of its origins so that the construction is always as important as its subject matter.

It is not always clear that the images surrounding us are controlled by their process, context and perception, but Ellenrieder makes this fact the focus of his oeuvre. In highlighting the construction of his images, Ellenrieder makes reference to the slipperiness of visual representation, to its fragility and its complex relationship with reality. In the convoluted spaces that rest somewhere between fiction and reality, Ellenrieder's paintings exist beyond space and time. In *Feuer (Reifen)*, as in the catastrophe images covering our newspapers, the depicted event could be anywhere, anytime, whether as a fantasy, a dream or a reality. In the end, the only truth is the existence of the image itself.

RH Gallery:
137 Duane Street New York, NY 10013. Tuesday – Saturday: 11am-7pm.

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