

GAYLEN GERBER

Gregory Montreuil

Flash Art

Flash Art 281 November - December 2011

RENWICK - NEW YORK

Building on ideas he has been working with for some time, Gaylen Gerber's "solo" show is really more than it seems. The exhibition includes works by other artists who agree to collaborate with Gerber, creating unforeseen juxtapositions that make authorship difficult to pin down.



GAYLEN GERBER, Installation view at Renwick, New York, 2011.

CourtesyRenwick, New York. Photo: James Ewing.

There are surprising mergers, as in a modestly scaled painting titled Support / Giotto's Dream, for Gaylen (Yellow Crowd Version) (2008) by Gaylen Gerber with Jeni Spota. On the backside of a Gerber monochrome, Spota has created a small painting, the stretcher bars forming a sort of frame with advertising visible. In this collaboration it seems one artist's effort necessarily negates the other's.

The exhibition also seems to pay homage to Gerber with multiple references. Two large billboard-sized works by Kathryn Andrews, blatantly titled Gaylen Gerber (2010), lean on opposite walls facing each other. One bill-board blares "it's all about" while the other panel extols "gaylen gerber!" Both become sculpture-like in their indoor setting.



Gaylen Gerber with Jeni Spota, Support/Giotto's Dream, for Gaylen (Yellow Crowd Version), 2008. Oil on Canvas, 30 x 36 cm. Courtesy Renwick, New York. Photo: James Ewing.

The Man (1989/2011), a Kay Rosen word piece, fills the end wall of the gallery. With top-to-bottom text, it echoes the same devotional tone, beginning with “the man who would be king” and ending with “the man who would be art king.” Another painting included in the exhibition is intentionally omitted from the checklist.

In a curious contradiction this solo show is not all about Gerber, and yet it is. Functioning between Duchamp’s readymades and the poetry of Marcel Broodthaers, Gaylen Gerber raises many questions with few concrete answers. Gerber’s role is a sort of impresario who uses the flux of his relationships with others to raise question of identity, originality and ownership. While this exhibition could be seen as egocentric, is it also possible that by working together and sharing the lime-light, others reward his efforts.