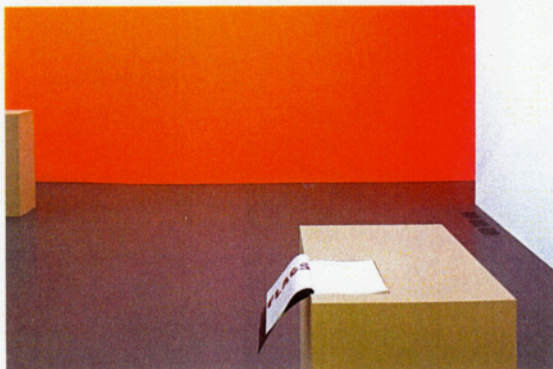


View of Gaylen Gerber and Joe Scanlan's exhibition, 2009; at Wallspace.



GAYLEN GERBER AND JOE SCANLAN WALLSPACE

Gaylen Gerber's reputation rests largely on his tactic of significantly altering the normal, expected viewing conditions in which the work of his colleagues is seen. He eschews the term "collaboration," disavowing the shared intentions that term implies. This recent "two-person project" with Joe Scanlan was a departure: Gerber showed three site-specific works which, while framing Scanlan's sculpture, also functioned autonomously.

Each is a roughly 6-by-4-foot sheet of tinted Plexiglas backed with silver leaf, varnished and screwed to the wall so as to barely clear the floor. The Plexi sheets are "souvenirs" (as the press release puts it) of Daniel Buren's *Crossing Through the Colors*, a work *in situ*, which was realized in 2006 at the Arts Club of Chicago. Buren, of course, insists that the art object is inseparable from its architectural/institutional context. Accordingly, Gerber draws attention to gallery conventions by altering them; *Support (amber)*, for example, was presented in the gallery's small back room on a wall painted red-orange and illuminated by high-intensity orange-yellow fluorescent bulbs. While wreaking havoc on the viewer's color perception, the treatment facilitated appreciation of the lovely, subtle sheen of the silver leaf. Thus "ground" became figure.

Scanlan, too, is skeptical of the historically exalted status of the art object,

but he has a nonacademic sense of humor about it. He has presented as sculpture a storage unit, a collapsible display table bearing his own multiples and artisanal dirt. Here, he showed *Flush 1* and *Flush 2* (both 2009), bland, boxy MDF pedestals that each hold one copy of his recent publication, *Red Flags*, in a snug notch. The book contains four essays on economics—by Joseph Schumpeter, Milton Friedman, Edward Said and Thorstein Veblen—"refracted" (the term is Scanlan's) and repurposed with his color-coded, interpolated daydreams, which domesticate the dismal science. Copies of the book, in an edition of 500, were available at the desk for \$25; placed on pedestals, two copies become components of certifiable art objects—asking price \$7,500.

Further complicating perception of the exhibition, the gallery's glass doors and large office window were covered with transparent blue vinyl film, which cast a chill answered by that amber glow. While ideas about color, context and appropriation are shared by Gerber and Scanlan, the most memorable moment here was unsigned, a fortuitous effect of light and pigment. Turning to exit the back room, the viewer might have noticed the visual sizzle of orange and blue light on the walls and ceiling, the radiant hues beautifully bleeding into the gallery's dark gray floor. This arresting prospect underscored the idea that preconditions are paramount; whoever specified that particular gray was enlisted as an unwitting co-author.

—Stephen Maine