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Review: Will Gorlitz

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implication is that the gallery is a metaphor for the city's art world, but there is more going on here than that.

Known for its ongoing critique of pictorial space in painting, Terada's work combines two modes of high modernist art: the monochrome painting and the ready-made. His ready-mades are texts that he appropriates from popular culture, like personal-column ads or, in one series, questions from the television show *Jeopardy!* Terada's work fits neatly into a stream of young, contemporary art-making, with the utopian appeal of the empty abstract surface and the disruptive, conceptual appeal of the ready-made fused together into one ambivalent whole.

For his exhibition, Terada hired municipal workers to replicate the road sign. In the gallery, it is an ironic, iconic reconstruction. Inevitably, it addresses two audiences: the traffic passing by the gallery window and the visitors inside the gallery. Although one can be part of both audiences, the changed perspectives have completely different implications.

With the gallery's enormous front window facing Vancouver's busy Granville Street, Terada's sign makes a spectacle for the rush of daily commuters. The outward-facing installation functions successfully to rupture public space and geographical boundaries. Typically, such signs anchor the borders of a city, declaring the beginning and end of place, but here, questions of Vancouver's identity, while raised, are displaced and left elegantly unanswered.

Looking at the sign from inside the gallery, everything changes. The exclusive context of the gallery space isolates the sign from its standard, universal visibility. An uneasy visual rhetoric arises, as if with its massive scale it has become an advertisement for the artist's authorship and the gallery's status. Terada appropriates the social form but turns it into a vehicle of self-mythification. In turning the sign into a double of itself, he empties its words of their literal, informative meaning.

Terada's installation is couched in Vancouver's cultural mythologies, both the generic, exemplary location depicted by the Vancouver Photoconceptualists and the lush, New World city captured by Vancouver's film and television industry. In the end, the uncertain, fluctuating status of his road sign is an open challenge to the problematics of Vancouver's local identity.

SÉAMUS KEALY



WILL GORLITZ *Moon/Point* 2001 Oil on canvas 52 cm tondo PHOTO CHERYL O'BRIEN

Will Gorlitz

◀◀
SABLE-CASTELLI GALLERY, TORONTO

While poetic in subject and sensual in application, the paintings of Will Gorlitz can also be disquieting. This dichotomy between harmony and discord was strongly apparent in Gorlitz's exhibition last spring, which consisted of three series of paintings—sunbursts through trees, moons and blurred flowers. The reductive quality of the imagery set up a juxtaposition of opposites: intimacy and distance, contemplation and observation, representation and abstraction.

Gorlitz has repeatedly explored the discourse between painting and photography. His paintings, rather than being true representations of photographs, live at the meeting point of the idea of the photo, the materiality of the painting and the artist's memory. As contemporary visual experience is formed through and mediated by the photographic image to the point that we don't question the image, the work questions the way an image is authenticated. Initially Gorlitz's paintings read as straightforward photographic representations, but on second look their subjective dimensions become apparent. These are images of fleeting moments that, through the process of painting, Gorlitz captures in his work.

This idea of the limits of seeing is most

present in the sunbursts through trees. Gorlitz paints light exploding through branches, capturing the briefest of visual moments. Vision poised at the extreme is also apparent in his still lifes, where hazy, blurry flowers are painted in muted tones of grey-green and violet. They are flowers seen as if through a veil of tears, evoking a sense of mourning.

The moon paintings in the exhibition provide another example of Gorlitz's project of exploring the inadequacy of visual perception in painterly representation. Picturing moons in night skies, the images capture motion and flux, taking the viewer into and through shifting perceptions. They work as talismans, fixing thoughts recorded through the act of painting. Their quiet, slow motion evokes colour-field abstraction and abandonment to the pleasure of painting.

Gorlitz creates tension between the materiality of traditional oil painting and the immateriality of the fleeting images he has chosen to paint. The sensitivity of his work in relationship to these ambiguous levels of understanding offers depth and complexity that seduce and fascinate. We are left to wonder at his ability to transcend representations of the physical world. Here are brief moments at the edge of vision, gloriously painted.

SARAH NIND