



ART CITIES:Brussels-Mark Hagen



Mark Hagen uses common, non-traditional materials in his painting and sculpture to break down hierarchies and reveal the processes of art-making. He approaches his work with an understanding of art historical precedents, but amalgamates this with contemporary structures, weaving together opposing elements of chance and control. This interplay of process and form is precarious, and his work looks eccentric, but the visual result is compelling.

By Efi Michalarou
Photo: Almine Rech Gallery Archive

Mark Hagen's solo exhibition **"Nude Group Therapy"** takes its title from an entry in "The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential" (1972) by the Union of International Associations, an NGO research institute based in Brussels, Belgium, which artfully, ambitiously and systematically attempts to catalog the woes of humanity as well as the means of alleviating them. At the entrance of the exhibition is **"Homage to Sapphic Modernity"** his newest screen sculpture, a tribute to one of Eileen Gray's best-known creations the 'brick screen' made in Paris in 1921, whose lacquered wood units happen to be very close in size and shape to Apple's titanium laptops from the early 2000s. Hagen stripped these obsolete computers down to their casings, which he then anodized in a DIY process using phosphoric acid from soft drinks and household electricity, imbuing the titanium with a patina. Also on presentation is a body of new works made through Hagen's established method of pressing paint through burlap or canvas onto underlying substrates such as plastic sheeting, glass, tape and plastic tiles. Using this process he generates a sculptural and painterly surface that nods to post-minimalism. In the second space of the Gallery we see an evolution in Hagen's method with his new three-dimensional relief paintings. They were inspired by the folded paper experiments conducted by Josef Albers at the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College, in which Albers challenged his students to make works out of nothing but paper, to let the medium's inherent characteristics shine through in the finished work. Hagen's process begins with the creation of full-sized folded paper objects, which the artist painstakingly pleats into three dimensional patterns. Silicone molds are then made of the paper sculptures, acrylic paint is then applied into the mold in numerous thin layers, which once dried, is backed with fiberglass reinforced plastic. The painting is then pulled out of the mold and fitted with an aluminum mounting and cleat armature on the back.

Info: Almine Rech Gallery, Abdijstraat 20 Rue de l'Abbaye, Brussels, Duration: 10/1-17/12/18, Days & Hours: Tue-Sat 11:00-19:00, www.alminerech.com



Mark Hagen, Colour therapy II, 2017, Cast acrylic paint, molding paste, fiberglass reinforced plastic, aluminium armature, 210.8 x 121.9 x 7.6 cm, © Mark Hagen, Courtesy of the artist and Almine Rech Gallery, Photo: Joshua White