

ALEXIS MARGUERITE TEPLIN

The Other Side of Paradise

3 DECEMBER 2011 – 4 FEBRUARY 2012

OPENING 3 DECEMBER 2011 6pm

Text by MARTHA KIRSZENBAUM

Outstretched fantasy by Martha Kirszenbaum

Imagine the wildest, most enchanting dream a painter could have: the freshly finished painting suddenly comes to life and literally jumps off of the canvas. Picture a ballet of loose canvases, of human-shaped linen fabric painted with colorful “taches” of oil paint, happily dancing to an inaudible sound. Welcome to the other side of paradise.

There is a straightforward physicality in Alexis Marguerite Teplin’s painting practice, a close relation to the body and performance. Her paintings are materially vibrant, moving elements of a theater *décor*, whose shape directly relates to costumes, amusingly recalling the Commedia Dell’Arte’s characters Pierrot and Harlequin. This is particularly the case in her work *Three Women* (2011), a two-meter large oil painting on loosely assembled pieces of canvas, adopting a patchwork shape and formally recalling Sonia Delaunay’s famous 1911 quilt, the inspiration for Orphism.

The works *Boy with Leaf*, *Ho HUM* and *POI* (2011) share an aesthetic quality influenced by French landscape and sensitive perceptions that can be understood as “Neo-Impressionism 2.0”. Her paintings brilliantly remind one of Cézanne’s “taches” of color, and of American painter Joan Mitchell’s radiating lines and colorful knots. *Boy with Leaf* is an abstract composition on which Teplin has glued a delicate linen feather, slightly sticking out from the frame. *Ho HUM* and *POI*, two large canvases colorfully painted with brush patches, have their onomatopoeic titles secretly inscribed on their surfaces with Anthon Beeke’s 1971 nude alphabet. Again here, the body is deeply connected to the painting’s subject.

The exhibition presents two new sculptures confirming Alexis Marguerite Teplin’s ability to fuse found materials into a strongly feminine constructed ensemble. Indeed, the base for the making of *Chicken* (2011) and *Shield* (2011) are two items related to the feminine world and body. Teplin used a 1960s Scott paper dress for these works, the iconic, shapeless one-dollar garment, whose extreme popularity expressed a new relation to manufactured mass production, and a revolution in the feminine idea of beauty—a central notion in the artist’s work. Another cult object utilized by the artist to fabricate her sculpture *Shield* is a Clarice Cliff plate, famously designed by the British ceramist in the 1930s. These elements of popular culture coalesce with her basic materials such as plaster and paint, creating hybrid objects that challenge history and cultural references.

Alexis Marguerite Teplin’s multidisciplinary work appears as a reflection upon extended painting – painting out of the canvas, sculpture-painting and performance-painting. Her first performative piece *The Party*, was staged at the Serpentine Gallery in London (2009) and then at Tramway for Glasgow International (2010). It featured four actor-philosophers all dressed in colorful loose pieces of linen fabric designed by Teplin herself. The play can be considered as a key-piece in the artist’s practice, a continuation of her work and a possibility to challenge and open up the discourse about what else painting can be.

Alexis Marguerite Teplin (USA, 1976) lives and works in London. Recent solo and group exhibitions include: Gavlak, Palm Beach; Tramway and Mary Mary, Glasgow; Serpentine Gallery and Hotel, London; East Side Projects, Birmingham; Focal Point Gallery, South End and Blanket, Vancouver.

Martha Kirszenbaum is an independent curator and writer based in Paris.