

## NICK OBERTHALER

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### PIÈCE DÉRIVÉE

PARIS MARAIS

18 Mar 2015 - 18 Apr 2015

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For his second solo exhibition at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Nick Oberthaler has chosen to explore the very gesture of exhibiting within art. The title *Pièce dérivée*, intentionally selected in French by the artist in order to play on the words' various meanings, is a *portmanteau*. Deployed in the white cube of the gallery, the concept invests the space as much as the physical pieces displayed on walls and in vitrines—while still showing reverence for their forms as objects. “*Pièce*” may refer as much to the piece of music that exists on the partition as to the music the moment it’s played, abstract and ephemeral once it comes to life through sound. “*Dérivé*” completes the vision that the artist focuses on, regarding the question of the work of art itself. Arranging salvaged fragments and elements, Oberthaler toys with the very notion of *derivation*, in the sense of manipulation, but also of *la dérive* as a shift without purpose, without reason. The way Nick Oberthaler carves out elements and forms is an invitation to decode and to recognize past artistic achievements, whose vestiges we reinterpret ceaselessly in the present day.

Nick Oberthaler, known for his drawings composed of subtle superpositions of photocopies, colored surfaces, and geometric forms, has recently radicalized and amplified his *œuvre* by painting on mirrored surfaces and by sometimes resorting to extremely basic materials, stripped of any commercial value, in order to question the very act of exhibiting, of creation, of art’s added value. From the microscopic scale of the colored paper fragment to the macroscopic scale of a detached wall, each element has the same representational value of the world. Nick Oberthaler’s work is one of detachment, a question of scale, a way of conceiving the universe through the orchestration of fragments and the sensitive gaze.

In this exhibition, Oberthaler particularly treats the different modes of representation in painting while interrogating the conditions of the image. The rapport between the subject, the reference, and the abstract characters—as well as the function and appearance of frameworks for imagery in the space—is reflected by repetitive arrangements and through collage. The boundaries between presentation and representation are confounded: the phenomenal experience of painting meets materiality, which at once makes possible and resists (or eludes) on both fronts, in so far as the painting itself is at once meaningful material and practical material.

Artist Nick Oberthaler was born in 1981, and trained at the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna and the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Geneva. His work has recently been featured at the Centre d’Art Bastille in Grenoble (*The Blackbird Must be Flying*, in collaboration with Thomas Julier) simultaneous with a solo exhibition (*Calculated Reserve*) at Museo Hendrik Christian Andersen/Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna in Rome (curated by Pier Paolo Pancotto). He is currently participating in *RIDEAUX/blinds*, an exhibition at Institut d’Art Contemporain in Villeurbanne (curated by Marie de Brugerolle) from February 6–May 3, 2015.