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## GERWALD ROCKENSCHAUB

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### DOING THE SAME AGAIN

PARIS MARAIS

02 Mar 2013 - 20 Apr 2013

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Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to present recent works from Gerwald Rockenschaub's two series *Pralinen* [chocolates] and *Intarsien* [marquetry], a series of sculptures and some wall objects. The *Pralinen* are a series of small-scale, painted, cuboid wooden objects, which in their setting are reminiscent of the design of luxury confectionery. The *Intarsien*, also of wood, are based on the type of inlaid work that flourished during the Italian Renaissance. Different varieties of wood veneer are laid on a flat surface to form patterns of varying colours and structures. The geometric aesthetic of Rockenschaub's sculptures shows the design process using the CAD program *Vectorworks*, while at the same time they are strongly reminiscent of models of Russian constructivist architectural fantasies. The wall objects are based on motifs from a work created in Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg in 2011 but, unlike that wall, here the icons are transferred from foil applications into the higher-value medium of milled and painted wood objects about 5 cm. in depth. These works, between hard-edge aesthetic and DIY romanticism, are typical of Rockenschaub's ideology-free fluctuation between "high" and popular culture.

The work of the Austrian artist Gerwald Rockenschaub (b 1952) has been associated with the term "neo-geo" since the early 1980s, which saw the formation of a group of young artists who used the formal vocabulary of the abstract avant-garde. Neo-geo permeated the aesthetic of American minimal art with the consumeristic attitude of pop art. Rockenschaub's work cannot, however, be categorised simply as a specific style. In his animations, in the *Pralinen* and *Intarsien* – which draw on classic panel painting –, in the wall objects, sculptures and room-specific installations, he relates in equal measure to ideas and positions of the modern age and to phenomena of everyday culture. In an act of radical reduction and concentration (the two basic principles of Rockenschaub's method) these are reduced to their essential element.

Rockenschaub's pictures are no longer based on the social or metaphysical utopias found in the pioneers of abstraction, but on abstract codes and patterns from the everyday world. Rockenschaub undermines the "characterisation" of the picture by deliberately withdrawing everything that might constitute individuality in a painting. Linear structures, individual geometric forms and colour fields suggest a narrative level, which the viewer has to draw on his own store of images to decipher. The aesthetic system of the Bauhaus, Kandinsky's abstract cosmos and the artistic concepts of pop art all show their influence, in roughly equal measure. One of the most outstanding characteristics of Rockenschaub's method is his advanced concept of production, with regard to the use and appropriation of modern technologies. He is one of the first artists to make use of a formal vocabulary which includes computer-generated graphics. Moreover, Rockenschaub has for years been an internationally respected DJ in the field of electronic music. This is reflected in the technoid aesthetic of his work, as well as in the title of his exhibition at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac in Salzburg in 2011: *If I ever had the chance again, I'd probably do the same*, from the song *Never, Never* (2011) by the British dubstep SBTRKT.

This exhibition takes place after Gerwald Rockenschaub's major retrospective, held in Wolfsburg Kunstmuseum April - September 2011, after his room-specific installations at the documenta in Kassel (2007) and his effective design for the exterior of the temporary Kunsthalle ["art hall"] on the Berlin Schlossplatz.

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