

CORY ARCANGEL

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

PARIS DEBELLEYME

24 Wednesday - 24 Friday



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce young American artist Cory Arcangel's fourth solo exhibition.

Born in Buffalo (NY) in 1978, Arcangel has built up an international reputation since 2004 with his innovative performances, videos and computer-generated projections.

In Paris, we are showing Arcangel's second exhibition, which includes works mainly in the classic genres of sculpture and painting. This coincides with his solo exhibition Cory Arcangel - Here Comes Everybody at the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof Berlin, open from 30 November 2010 until 1 May 2011.

The title "Image is Everything" is that of the 1991 advertising campaign mounted by Andre Agassi for the Canon camera company. Arcangel explains, "The Canon campaign became so all-encompassing that it actually ended up overshadowing Agassi's tennis career during that time. I recently got really into his 90s and late 80s phase and therefore started searching for artifacts on eBay from that era of his career. Agassi's style during that time - ripped denim, neon, and faded pastels color - influenced the works in the show. [...] a lot of my works start from similar vague interests..." The impartiality with which Arcangel perceives software, hardware and Internet resources as raw art materials, placing them in new contexts, reveals a completely novel style. In the mid-2000s, he became well known particularly through his practice of archaeology in historical computer technology of the 1980s, while in recent years he has expanded his repertoire of art material and digital sources.

Two series shown in Paris, consisting of computer-generated works, could be called "digital ready-mades." These are the sculptures from the CNC Wire Form Product Demonstration series and the photographically produced C-prints from the Photoshop Product Demonstration series. The Wire Forms, arrangements of metal rods shaped by a robot and then powder-coated, are based on a computer program developed by the artist to produce random forms. Their appeal lies in their being computer-generated yet at the same time shaped using analogue techniques, like a classic sculpture. The Gradients, by contrast, are based on pre-set patterns from the graphics software Photoshop. The artist can determine the composition with a single click of the mouse, each click forming the title of the work, and he provides precise instructions for the user to produce such pictures. In the installation *Since U Been Gone...*, which consists of a CD player and 48 CDs, the artist experiments with a system and genealogy used in a special, currently popular "Punk Pop Top 40 Music," which he sees as ideally embodied in Kelly Clarkson's *Since U Been Gone*. An arrangement of 48 CDs enables Arcangel to reconstruct the influences from the music of the past 50 years which led to this and similar hits. The work is interactive, and the viewer can listen to the CDs, although the artist regards the installation primarily as a sculpture. Arcangel's series of Kinetic Sculptures, groups of Dancing Stands often found in cheap electronics stores, and the Sport Products, Oakley sunglasses cast in bronze, refer to an era of 1990s design which was followed shortly afterwards by that of Steve Jobs' sleek iPods. The Kinetic Sculptures, a kind of "cheap and tacky Sol LeWitt," according to the artist, also pose the question of why the canon of art history has largely discarded kinetic sculpture, and how far the canonization of high culture is determined by changing tastes and fashions. The ageing process of technologies is of course a central theme in Arcangel's work, but he nevertheless does not see himself purely as a nostalgist. Rather, he looks at the way people smile indulgently at past fashions and technologies as a basic characteristic of human behavior. "I think maybe in retrospect [about old technologies] we realize our lack of perspective. And this of course doesn't just have to do with technology but it extends to fashion and culture in general. How could we have dressed like that? How could we have thought that way? What once seemed all encompassing now has no value. It's, I guess, one of those quirks of human existence," says Arcangel. In the series *Timeless Standards*, Arcangel illustrates how the iconography of one of the most important 20th-century artists is transferred into the world of design and commerce and then taken back by the artist into the sphere of art.

Last year, the Lacoste firm was selling polo shirts clearly inspired by Roy Lichtenstein. Arcangel decided to bring back the Lichtenstein motif into the White Cube, by scanning the shirts, printing out the scans and applying them on to Comtex, a type of flat board. The floor installation *Skipping Stones* is to be seen in a similar context; here FLOR textile tiles are laid to form a structure resembling a classic sculpture by Carl André. The exhibition includes a new video installation, *There's Always One at Every Party*, for which Arcangel has collected all the scenes from *Seinfeld* (one of the most influential American 1990s sitcoms) in which Kramer talks about his *Coffee Table Book* about Coffee Tables. Here Arcangel uses the "supercut" technique (a popular internet genre), where thematically linked scenes copied from a film are strung together. In this idea of a *Coffee Table Book* about Coffee Tables, he sees a phenomenon with parallels in conceptual art. "What I'm interested in is to mix this online vernacular style and *Seinfeld*, and then place the whole thing back into a fine art context," explains the artist. It is rare for an artist of the youngest generation to receive such concentrated attention from distinguished cultural institutions.

In 2004, works by Arcangel were already being shown in the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Royal Academy of Art, London, at the Liverpool Biennial, in the Whitney Museum of Art, New York and the Guggenheim Museum, New York. In 2005, the Migros Museum, Zurich held a comprehensive solo exhibition of his work. In 2008, he participated in the exhibition *Color Chart: Reinventing Color, 1950 to Today* in the New York Museum of Modern Art. This year, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami and the University of Michigan Museum of Art mounted solo exhibitions, to be followed in 2011 by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and the Barbican Gallery, London.