

PARIS ART FEBRUARY 6, 2014

PETER HALLEY

by admin



Peter Halley, *Perfect Sense*, 2011. Courtesy Galerie Xippas, c. Peter Halley

As part of the Nouveau Siècle festival, whose theme this time is “The New York Moment”, the Saint-Étienne Museum of Modern Art is dedicating one of the three exhibitions to Peter Halley, a New York artist from the post-minimalism. His works are part of the “Neo Geo” movement that emerged in the 1980s. Peter Halley works on the geometric motif which symbolizes social organization. Both artist and art theorist, author of essays, he is also interested in the historical and contextual variations of the meanings that geometry can take.

All the works on display allow us to appreciate the consistency of Peter Halley’s work. All his compositions play on three geometric motifs, which function as metaphors for the “prison”, the “cell” or “conduits”. The patterns are arranged in a rigorous and balanced way, like a social space that contemporary architecture tends to geometrize excessively.

The rectangular and square shapes and the cell bars are flat in primary and contrasting colors. From the oldest works harmonizing bluish and golden grays with black, to the most recent ones assembling primary and fluorescent and garish colors, the work goes from a dull aspect to an almost psychedelic aspect, testifying to a growing inspiration drawn from the Pop art. As for the patterns, they refer more to urban signage, media codes and the technologies of consumer societies. The use of industrial materials, “Day-Glo” or “Roll-a-Tex” (thickening medium or fluorescent synthetic color), tend to accentuate the impersonal character of the fabrics.

By a play of reversals, inversions, or contrasts, the hanging helps to highlight the correspondences between the patterns of certain canvases. The repetition creates a mechanical impression. The paintings produced under the presidency of George W. Bush, such as *Time-to-live* or *Out of Control*, are gathered in the same room. Presented vertically or horizontally, the same canvas can evoke a prison or a tomb. Peter Halley in a way stages a disturbed world, as if upside down.

In the last room, the canvases are like variations on the theme of the prison, with more or less bars, some suspended, others placed on the ground ...

Peter Halley’s works establish a dialogue between abstraction and social symbolization

through geometric and chromatic language. The increasing geometrization and standardization of contemporary social space gives rise to a haunting feeling of confinement and a sclerosis of lifestyles and thoughts.

Works

- Peter Halley, Double or Nothing , 2008. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas. 203 x 160 cm.
- Peter Halley, The Collaboration , 2008. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas. 229 x 183 cm.
- Peter Halley, Strings , 2009. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Local Loop , 2007. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Cached , 2005. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Time-to-live , 2005. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas. 208 x 173 cm.
- Peter Halley, Out of Control, 2005. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Resister, 2006. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Aftermath , 2004. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Blackout , 2005. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, The Dilemma , 2006. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Perfect Sense , 2011. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, The Science of Cool, 2011. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Win Win , 2011. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas.
- Peter Halley, Into the Storm , 2009. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas. 233.5 x 238 cm.
- Peter Halley, Cross Roads , 2002. Acrylic, day-Glo & Roll-a-Text acrylic on canvas. 244 x 213.5 cm.