

# GALERIE JOCELYN WOLFF

## **STEPHANE CALAIS**

### ***LE STYLE***

Opening on September 12, 2007  
September 13 – October 27, 2007  
Wednesday to Saturday, 2pm – 7pm

For a while I was surprised that people would label my work and me, professionally, as "atypical". I think about works and how to finalize them efficiently in terms of my commitments, ambitions or goals. Yet recently I've thought about what this adjective implies: in sum, there must be a misunderstanding. I do not seek out anything in the margins, rather I find my "subjects" on the sides. Just to be clear, there is no difference between margins and sides for me. What I mean by "sides" involves the non-dominant, a side road rather than a highway. The roads are there, and I just take them. They allow me to see, make visible from a certain point of view, and rethink the efficiency of an artwork's presence.

Just as I do not choose the road that is dominant, with a sign, I cannot render my work hieratic.

As I have written elsewhere, my work takes multiple forms so to avoid becoming entrapped. By its very nature, drawing, my foremost tool, allows me to navigate the different fields it crosses (see the numerous texts on this subject).

Questions that follow concerning the mediums I use (paint, wall drawing, image or object collages) are classical, standard ones, as each medium is reevaluated in the context of the present.

Yet it is when they are combined (in spite of or due to the autonomy demanded and taken on by each work) and within their proximity that tension, ellipses and shortcuts come into play. This is why the setting for and nature of an exhibition are always significant and important in how the work is apprehended, perceived, understood, and envisaged in a moment in the present and in History, in all modesty. This goes without saying.

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*3 stones (lotus)*, 2006-2007, is a painted digital collage, as are the "syncretistic" objects (like *nbnz*, 2007 and *boxe thai*, 1999 and *les lierres*, 2003) which are retouched object collages. What is in play has to do with the process of making of a collage, the way in which fragments of the real are taken and reevaluated through the artistic gesture of assembling over and over again.

*nbnz*, 2007 and *une conversation, une charte*, 2007. Collage and assemblage refurbish a sedimentary object in a way that only contemporary art can: to assemble a group of idea-thoughts, even contradictory ones into one unit. *all purposes New York* (2003-2007) and *all purposes Paris* (2003-2007) are equally sedimentary units, though more recent in their realization. The notebook covers are "pedestaled" by their open Plexiglas frame. The traces of color on the "Borden & Riley" were essentially made over sometimes years with Pantone felt pens. These will fade with light and over time, in contrast to the contents of the notebooks: drawings, small paintings, small objects, digital prints, notes and CD containing multiple archives... all of which is locked inside a belt of Plexiglas into which the notebook was forced.

*M/H/S* (2007) is a series of framed color washing and digital print on paper. Here, portraits from History rub shoulders with triviality and the place of their making. I wrote "No mystery, just the echo" behind a parrot drawn in black and white. Thus I confirm.

*L'herbier (petit Trianon)*, 2007. Four "realistic" drawings of plants are silk-screened on transparent, anti-UV PVC. Their overlay hinders a clear reading of each element, giving a slight interference effect. The subject is a kind of cultural minimum: plants. *L'herbier (petit Trianon)* tends to this minimum.

All paintings on canvas in acrylic and ink always tend toward a kind of concretion. Here, the layers are obvious: the gradation of the smoothed background, then the marked gesture of the colors, and finally the line or lines of ink that freeze the pictorial gesture. These three processes aim at distancing the "painting" process, and yet the simplest subjects, trivial and/or idiot, plunge me back into it. I often have an intuition that:

"Is Bliss then, such Abyss,  
I must not put my foot amiss  
For fear I spoil my shoe?"

Emily Dickinson, 1862

Text by Stéphane Calais, September 2007.