

GALLERIA MASSIMO MININI

Via Apollonio 68 – 25128 Brescia tel. 030383034 info@galleriaminini.it www.galleriaminini.it

bertrand lavier
mathieu mercier

Sentences – vol. III

Bertrand Lavier was already well known in the '70s, with photographic works that had been in the Venice Biennale, but I met him in Paris, at Eric Fabre's, where I saw a beautiful show, by a young surprising man. Large objects, a grand piano among other things, slathered with big daubs of acrylic paint, a *touche a la Van Gogh*, paint the same color as the object, paint that covers but lets you see the form magnified, which reproduces any lettering, that mimics what is already there, but improved, fattened up, conveyed by paint (as matter) into the world of painting (as fine art). In those day I must have been quicker on my feet: I suggested a show with me, his first in Italy, and he was pretty quick himself. A show almost immediately, coverage in *Domus*, major articles, then two more exhibitions over the years, then our ties slackened. He tried out other galleries in Italy, as all his colleagues from the '60s did. And then here he is again, with new works that go beyond the categories of painting and sculpture, new objects which are paintings of themselves, forcing the artistic representation to seize even the ready made.

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Mathieu Mercier is the latest in the long list of French artists I've exhibited: Daniel Buren, Niele Toroni, André Cadere, Claude Rutault, Bertrand Lavier, Bernar Venet, Philippe Thomas, and then this kid. He seems so young to me, but actually also Buren had that age when he first exhibited at my galley. Mathieu was Daniel's student at the famous Pompidou school with Pontus Hultén, like Ghada Amer and Alessandra Tesi. A good school. He won the Prix Duchamp, which in France is the equivalent of the Turner Prize. In short, talented, with a cold approach, somewhere between architecture and design *detourné*. An ironic artist who parodies things, objects; and with his concrete works wants to share with us experiences that go beyond the exhibition: *toutes les oeuvres qui m'intéressent me traversent comme des fulgurances*. Who can blame him...
In this exhibition I agree with Mathieu also on collections: so that 260 different objects are stolen from the market and raised to a symbolic system, but they are still a *work in progress*, endless, impossible to complete. Maybe me too I'll show him one of my collections.

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