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JAN VAN IMSCHOOT

The interference of perception

OPENING MONDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2010, 6 PM

28 September - 29 October 2010

Erna Hecey is very pleased to announce *The interference of perception*, a solo exhibition of recent paintings by Jan Van Imschoot at ATOZ Luxembourg.

Painting for Van Imschoot is both medium and message: it is through the medium of painting that the artist creates conflicted messages about painting's ability to render spatial as well as historical illusion. Yet rather than allow his paintings to enforce the illusion of representation, Van Imschoot makes them testify to a lack of narrative and perceptual homogeneity. If indeed painting, for Van Imschoot, is both medium and message, then this message remains prone to interferences caused by the medium – a medium presumed to stand for tradition and stability.

In Van Imschoot's work, the historical interferences that disrupt the illusion of painting's certainty range from references to paintings by Renaissance masters such as Veronese to those of more recent practitioners – Henri Matisse, René Daniëls, Luc Tuymans and so-called Leipzig School painters like Neo Rauch. These and other references populate Van Imschoot's paintings not as stars in a blockbuster film, but as 'extras', so that the history of painting according to Van Imschoot reads like a minor one, a subaltern rather than master narrative.

As if to begin at the (mythical) beginning of illusionistic representation in painting – with the fifteenth-century experiments by Filippo Brunelleschi and Leone-Battista Alberti – the canvases included in *The interference of perception* feature ambiguous architectural scenes, interiors that could as well be exteriors. In these works, Van Imschoot appears to have swapped the painter's for the film studio. The comparison is hardly far-fetched, given the superficial resemblance of the idealised Renaissance cityscape in painting and the film set, and the less superficial resemblance between Brunelleschi's perspective device and the filmic apparatus. The chairs, arches, tables, doors and windows* in Van Imschoot's paintings thus seem to hint at a possibility of an exterior projected beyond the interior where the painter is painting, but without ever managing to represent it credibly. Painting remains trapped within the four walls of its own illusion, as it does within its frame.

Painting's larger frame – that which defies representation – has always been the market, not only the art market but the wider systems of exchange regulated by institutions on whose walls paintings would hang (before ending up in museums): banks, law firms, private villas. It is significant therefore that Van Imschoot's painterly reflection on painting's ability to connect with its space and time should take place in a financial consultancy firm. This is not merely to say that *The Interference of Perception* articulates a critique of the system that ensures painting's relevance, but rather to point out how the perspectival lines in Van Imschoot's paintings extend to their surroundings, bridging the artifice of representation and the immaterial structure of day-to-day reality. Whereas this bridge once served to confuse fact and fiction (as in trompe-l'œil painting), in Van Imschoot's case it demonstrates the power of representation to interfere with perceived reality, bringing the latter under greater scrutiny.

Born in 1963, Jan Van Imschoot lives and works in Gent, Belgium. He has had numerous solo exhibitions, including at SMAK (Gent) and the Museum of Fine Arts (Tallinn), and has taken part in group exhibitions at MUHKA (Antwerp), Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin) and CAC (Vilnius), among many others.

Antony Hudek
London, September 2010

*Hubert Damisch notes the critical difference in Brunelleschi's and Alberti's perspectival experiments: while the former refers to a door, the latter invokes a window. See Damisch, *L'Origine de la perspective*, Flammarion, 1987, p. 102, and Gérard Wajcman, *Fenêtre : Chroniques du regard et de l'intime*, Verdier 2004, p. 52.

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