

THOMAS DUNCAN GALLERY

Steven Baldi

FIAC 2014

October 23 – 26, 2014

For the 2014 edition of FIAC Thomas Duncan Gallery will present a solo exhibition of five meticulously hand-painted works on canvas by Los Angeles-based artist Steven Baldi. These works continue the artist's investigation into the photographic, painterly and architectural concerns that comprise the core of his practice. The works to be presented at FIAC were made to engage with the temporary architecture of the fair by being installed at the limits of the booth – both in corners and at the very edge of the walls, physically activating the space and the works within it.

These five paintings are the latest addition to the artist's ongoing catalog painting project. The trajectory of the project has until now been extremely linear: each set of paintings has been directly built off of the foundation that the previous set had laid. However, these latest works represent a distinct shift in Baldi's work from that of commenting on matters surrounding exhibition contexts to a more direct physical engagement with space.

The development of Modernism and the correlative processes of mechanization, be they photographic, architectural or industrial, are a central interest in Baldi's catalog works. A specific moment where these disciplines began to coalesce was in 1932, when the Museum of Modern Art mounted an exhibition entitled *Modern Architecture: International Exhibition*. The exhibition consisted of models, photographs and plans of what would come to be known as "International Style" architecture. The artists' catalog painting project explores this specific exhibition in order to archeologically examine a formative moment in the creation of the Twentieth Century museum. Baldi's project reflects upon the ramifications the institution has had on the production and dissemination of information regarding works of art. In particular, the museum publication has become a central subject for the artist, with its incorporation and codification of photography and technical data, which ultimately established a set of operations that would prove fundamental to the developing role of the modern institution within society.

The FIAC presentation will highlight that the compositions and placement of the hand-painted catalog images within the paintings are determined by the works' relationship to existing architecture -- the bisected representation of the painted catalog comes in direct contact with the physical architecture to create a tension between representation of space and true physical space. Other compositional elements such as the faintly drawn blue pencil markings designate where the catalog and announcement cards were placed in the artist's previous catalog paintings, functioning here as a placeholder, appearing and disappearing depending on the viewer's proximity to the works.