



New Work

Robert Buck

CRG Gallery

June 19 – August 1, 2014

For my third show at CRG Gallery (as Robert Buck), I'm exhibiting eight paintings from three new bodies of work: "*At the end of the day...*"; *The Letter! The Litter!*; and *Figure of Speech*. Aware of obstacles and repetition, the question was how to handle the death drive as it operates in hypermodernity, and via myself, as subject. Each series formally relies on the grid, relative to its current guise in Photoshop and GPS satellites, but only in order to disturb it. The new work both recapitulates and forecasts the development of my art.

"*At the end of the day...*" paintings rekindle a recent headline-news event, an inexplicable, yet no longer uncommon, random act of violence or maleficence. A single image of what happened, or its aftermath, salvaged from scores of images dumped on the inter-net, is cropped, flipped, inverted, multiplied, and printed on canvas. Disrupting the digitally generated mosaic is a silkscreened image of an organically occurring pattern in nature, one with a subliminal link to the event. At first glance the image-event lattice is likely to be apperceived as wallpaper, fabric, or décor; but look again, and the trellis of recurring images isn't the trauma but a screen against it. Against this incessant backdrop, it's not easy to know what is "natural" and what is not.

The Letter! The Litter! canvases are embellished transcriptions of scraps of writing I find on the street, discarded or lost remainders of a correspondence, diary, or publication. I pair the littered words with the pattern or print of factory-made fabric, which is stretched as canvas. The printed pattern is re-worked with acrylic paint and dressmaking materials, such as safety pins or grommets, which I use to make words or letters. In 2014, using garment fabric as canvas is an immediately identifiable "ready-to-wear" means to detain the eye and cipher the body. It's also a nod to Duchamp having divined the readymade with the introduction of pre-mixed manufactured pigments in a tube – there is no "blank canvas", the mark was made.

The diptych *Figure of Speech* ("*Father Christmas*") is about the body itself as littered by language, in which the right-hand canvas modifies associations triggered by the left-hand one. Store bought fabric is again the ground, and I reiterate or "break" the pattern with assorted gestures, including "Dear Santa" letters copied from a west Texas local newspaper. The work was inspired by a homophonic word play of the expression "Father Christmas" that appeared in a dream. This is the most autobiographical work in the show; a direct attempt to make sense of the havoc caused by the death of my seven year-old brother when I was six.

Painting, in the 21st Century, transpired for me as an alternate timeframe while making these canvases; an endeavor that harbors a growing paradox: the body as obsolete, waste product, yet *real*, the necessary substance with which to fulfill the impossible injunction to "enjoy better".

– Robert Buck, El Paso, TX, June 2, 2014 / New York City, June 18, 2014