



L'ŒIL DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE

Monory and the American night: From photography to painting

JEAN-PAUL GAVARD-PERRET FEBRUARY 8, 2018

Evocative of the world's deadly or quotidian violence, Jacques Monory's blue (and sometimes pink) paintings have, for the past 40 years, been combining an exact reproduction of reality—namely through traditional, stereotypical images of American life—with all sorts of dreamlike fantasies.

This collision creates a feeling of undeniable malaise, a sense of the end of the world, as if things, and above all light and the sun, had suddenly gone mad and were collapsing into the night. The painter's superb first New York exhibition challenges us to imagine precisely this reversal, which is exploited here in all its ambiguity. We come to understand how Monory constructs his images, starting with black-and-white photos he either takes himself or cuts out from newspapers, in order to appropriate the world through imitation while at the same time producing a kind of warning.

America—the country or the myth—features prominently in his work. Monory is fascinated by its landscapes, the vast stretches of desert; by the nearly childish cult of objects (cars, pistols, hats); and the blend of washed-out stereotypes, violence, and romanticism that stands out against a thriller like background. A recreational shooter,

the artist even shot holes through some of his canvases (“after passing through Arizona where Inspector Harry Zona...”), namely the series entitled *Murder*, where the artist stages his own assassination in a frigid, blue ambiance.

More generally, there are always stories that are supposedly happening, as the artist points out, *“behind or next to the painting which, at first sight, may look like a banal image.”* The viewers of such “thrillers” is encouraged to tell their own story through them, to transpose their own fantasies onto the canvas, since the paintings function like images in a large pot of soup kitchen.

Jean-Paul Gavard-Perret

Jean-Paul Gavard-Perret is a poet, critic, and associate professor in communication at the Université de Savoie in France.

Jacques Monory

January 12 to February 23, 2018

Richard Taittinger Gallery

154 Ludlow St

New York, NY 10002

USA

<https://richardtaittinger.com/>