



# BERTRAND LAVIER

TEFAF NEW YORK SPRING  
Booth 314

Park Avenue Armory  
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New York  
USA

May 3rd – 7th, 2019

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Internationally renowned artist Bertrand Lavier uses the word 'chantier' [worksite] where others will talk about a series. For him, the word indicates the permanently open, permanently interrogative nature of the different groups of his work. He doesn't proceed progressively or by stages, but rather deals with recurrent questions, endlessly moving from one kind of work to another, blurring the boundaries between painting and sculpture, sculpture and object, reality and representation. Together the works exhibited by kamel mennour for TEFAF New York, which have been drawn from a number of different 'worksites', are representative not only of Lavier's artistic practice, but also of its continuity, creating an amused history of painting according to Bertrand Lavier. This begun around 1980, when Lavier was 'representing' all sorts of objects by painting directly onto them with his van Gogh touch. With these veritable trompe-l'œil, with the merging of the model and its representation pushed to the extreme, it becomes impossible to distinguish the one from the other.

Frédéric Legros

Born in 1949 in Châtillon-sur-Seine (France), BERTRAND LAVIER lives and works in Paris and Aignay-le-Duc, near Dijon (France). His work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions around the world: at the Centre Pompidou, the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Grand Palais, the Louvre Museum, the Musée d'Orsay, the Palais de Tokyo, the Monnaie de Paris, the Château de Versailles, the Fondation Vincent van Gogh in Arles, the Consortium in Dijon, the Tate Gallery and the Serpentine Gallery in London, the Villa Sauber in Monaco, the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels, the Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin, the Haus der Kunst in Munich, the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel, the Frankfurter Kunstverein in Frankfurt am Main, the MAMCO in Geneva, the Kunsthalle in Berne, the Punta della Dogana-Pinault Collection in Venice, the Macro-Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma and the Villa Medici in Rome, the mumok-museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien in Vienna, the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, the MoMA PSI and the Swiss Institute in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, the Maison Hermès Dosan Park in Seoul, the Hong Kong Museum of Art, as well as part of the Venice Biennale. His work was recently exhibited at the Couvent des Jacobins in Rennes—as part of the exhibition « Debut ! » presenting works from the Pinault Collection—, as well as at the Espace Louis Vuitton Tokyo, and at the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp. A solo exhibition of the artist is on show at kamel mennour (47 rue Saint-André-des-Arts, Paris 6), from April 18th, to May 25th, 2019.

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MIM, 1981. Acrylic paint on fire extinguisher, 64 x 23 x 16 cm



In 1981, Bertrand Lavier made *MIM*, a fire extinguisher whose model supplied the work's title and a significant play on words, 'mime' (homophonic with the title in the French pronunciation of the word) evoking the notion of imitation. Like an illusionist, Lavier turns the object into a sort of score for painting. He augments painting's function for imitating the object to the point of making it itself the object. 'It is a painting that covers exactly what it's talking about,' he says. Paradoxically, here a perfect representation of the object is only possible when the original object is completely hidden, entirely disappearing behind the paint. A painted fire extinguisher was exhibited in

New York in 1984 as part of the exhibition 'An International Survey of Recent Painting and Sculpture', curated by Kynaston McShine at MoMA—Museum of Modern Art.





Walt Disney Productions 1947-2019 n°1, 2019. Acrylic paint on inkjet print on canvas, 153 x 207 x 3 cm

Playing with our relationship to reality, Bertrand Lavier emphasises the endless back and forth between the art world and popular culture, overlaying manufactured objects with his cultural references. In 1977, *Le Journal de Mickey* published an episode entitled *Des traits très abstraits* ['Very Abstract Lines'], in which Mickey and Minnie could be seen investigating a modern art museum, surrounded as they were by the objects of the museum's collection. With *Walt Disney Productions 1947-2019*, Bertrand Lavier took what had been no more than the scenery for Mickey's and Minnie's adventure and reproduced these objects as faithfully as possible, paintings and sculptures representative of modern art through Disney's own prism now coming to life in reality. The painting hung on a yellow wall makes light of a double, vertiginous movement:

the viewer enters into the reality of the comic strip, while the represented image enters into the real world. With Bertrand Lavier's work, the viewer is always faced with a floating entity: she contemplates neither a piano nor a painting and yet this object could just as well be called a piano or a painting. Reality is turned inside out like a glove.

The *Walt Disney Productions* have been shown at a range of institutions, including the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in San Diego, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Kunstmuseum Luzern, the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein in Vaduz, and the Castello di Rivoli in Turin.

A group of *Walt Disney Productions* sculptures is currently on show in the garden of the Hotel Le Bristol Paris until 20 November 2019.



Ramlösa, 2013  
Acrylic gel on dibond, 125 x 305 x 4,9 cm

In a worksite begun in 1984, Bertrand Lavier paints over not just an object but an object that shows other objects: the mirror. In its essence, the mirror embodies the almost perfect imitation of reality. With *Ramlösa*, a mirror covered in Lavier's meta-signature—in this case a translucent version of the van Gogh touch—the artist has created a new experience for the viewer, who finds herself face to face with her own reflection blurred to the point of becoming a moving painting by Bertrand Lavier. At once the same and another, aesthetic illusion exists for the artist only if the correct distance is preserved.

This work was shown as a part of Lavier's exhibition 'L'affaire tournesols' at the Vincent van Gogh Foundation in Arles in 2015.



Nobilis n°2, 2019. Acrylic paint on canvas, 185,5 x 144,5 x 3,5 cm

If the history of movements in painting is traditionally formed around the gesture of placing paint on a canvas, Bertrand Lavier prolongs this history. With *Nobilis n°2*, he has covered a bolt of upholstery fabric with his own pictorial touch and layer, repeating the

patterns of the underlying support. It thus becomes a question whether the representation of an abstract pattern belongs to the domain of figuration. The title of the work comes from the original fabric, produced by the fabric and wallpaper manufacturer Nobilis.



Steinway, 2019. Acrylic paint on piano, 180 x 145 x 100 cm

With his latest worksite, Lavier's painting has taken a new direction. He has reevaluated the distance of aesthetic illusion, and with *Steinway*, as he likes to say, he has 'moved onto his Fauvist period'. The painterly gesture comes to the fore and partially frees itself from its ties to reality. Lavier continues to follow the lines of the object, but entirely modifies the colour. The black and white keys of the Steinway piano become red and pink. The choice of object is not insignificant. Not only is the piano made up of identified colours, but it is also one of the most emblematic of Lavier's repainted objects. He made *Steinway & Sons* in

1987. Now, with this explosive, colourful paint job, a new layering principle is at work. This is a Bertrand Lavier reinterpreted, repainted by Lavier. An exhibition of the artist's 'Fauvist period' is currently on show at kamel mennour (47 rue Saint-André-des-Arts), Paris, until May 25th, 2019.