



de-finition/method #236. "goldfish go painting" 2005
Painting on canvas, aquarium.
Variable dimensions according to the actualisation
Photo: Antoine Cadot. Courtesy Galerie Perrotin

de-finition/method: a canvas, about 146 x 114 cm (57^{1/2} x 44^{3/4} inches), left white or painted the same color as the wall in front of which it's hung. the charge-taker chooses the color from among those that, for him or her, evoke the work of matisse. the canvas is hung some fifty centimeters (19^{3/4} inches) in front of the wall. in the lower right corner, there's a "caption" in the form of a rectangular cut-out. through this "caption-window" you can see a cylindrical fishbowl in which three to five goldfish swim. the fishbowl is placed on a stack of canvases set up on the floor behind the main canvas.

Claude Rutault

November 20, 2014 – January 3, 2015

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 20, 6-8pm

"In painting, everyone positions their pawns" – Claude Rutault

Galerie Perrotin, New York is pleased to present a collection of works by Claude Rutault, **the artist's first solo exhibition in America** following four decades of prominent and influential practice in France. Rutault's work, beginning with a 1974 show staged at the office of a Parisian psychoanalyst, has consistently approached painting as a social practice embedded in the living relationships between artwork, artist, gallery, collector, museum and auction house.

The present exhibition features sixteen de-finition/methods, including early works such as "**positive/ negative 2**" 1975 and "**formats at the limit 2**" 1974 (shown at the artist's studio during a residency at PS1, New York in 1979), as well as four new pieces: "**charity begins with others**", "**painting against the wall, front and back**", "**the exhibition**" and "**suicide-painting 11**" (all 2014).

Claude Rutault describes himself as a painter; and indeed, viewing any one of his pieces is uncontroversially an encounter with paint on canvas. Rutault, however, does not paint his pieces himself; and neither is he in the business of overseeing their production on the model of a producer, designer, or director running a factory, studio, or workshop. Instead, the mainspring of Rutault's practice is the writing and issuing of a set of rules, caveats, instructions and procedures called "de-finition/methods," according to which a gallery, collector, or institution—known as the "charge-taker"—agrees to "actualize" a given work.

The first of these de-finition/methods, created in 1973, provided the germ for the hundreds of unique works to follow. **de-finition/method #1. "canvas per unit"** 1973 reads: "a stretched canvas painted the same color as the wall on which it's hung. All commercially available formats can be used, be they rectangular, square, round or oval." With this initial, relatively spare prescription, the characteristic features of Rutault's work are evident: open-ended, ongoing, participatory, contractual, and mutually contingent with the conditions and environment in which it is to be actualized. The parameters, shape, color and placement of the painting are constrained only by the ingenuity of its charge-taker in applying the rules established by its de-finition/method, the permutations and specific consequences of which cannot be controlled and could not have been wholly predicted by Rutault. If the charge-taker wishes to change the color of his painting, he must change the color of the wall as well. If the charge-taker wishes to repaint his wall, he must repaint the canvas to match. If he wishes to relocate the work, wall, painting, or both must be repainted according to the de-finition/method. Unforeseen varieties of works ensue, and report of their vagaries must be filed with Rutault—to his surprise, amusement, satisfaction, or conceivably, to his displeasure. In whichever case, he must live apart from his paintings if they are to continue living on their own; and at this juncture his role in relation to the work might be described, equally and alternately, as a referee of a game he has set into motion, as a parent watching his child sink or swim, or as a kind of cataloguer of the changes to and consequences of his own hard work.

The several hundred de-finition/methods composed over the course of Rutault's career vary in complexity and specificity, narrowing or opening up possible topologies of painting. Taken together, the body of Rutault's texts might be described as variations on a theme—not unlike the oeuvre of a composer—or the development of a family of painting games engaging with the history and future of the medium. That color is the variable on which the first de-finition/method (and many others) is contingent, should not, however, suggest that Rutault's interest lies exclusively with color or any other specific material or visual property of painting; many of the de-finition/methods explicitly establish conditions by which a piece is to be bought, sold, priced, traded, auctioned, transferred, or profited by. **de-finition/method #600. "charity begins with others"** 2014 (included in this exhibition) mandates that the work can be acquired only if the charge-taker donates three of the five circular canvases to three different charities, each of which is then free to sell the work as it chooses; while the charge-taker, for his part, must display the remaining two paintings beside a photograph of the entire work (all five canvases).

The transactional and market caveats mandated by other de-finition/methods more obviously and directly determine the form of the actualization itself. In **de-finition/method #449. "im/mobilier"** 2010 two canvases, hung side by side, have their price indexed according to the square meter price of the building in which they are actualized. The surface area of the left canvas remains fixed as a kind of control, while the surface area of the right increases or decreases in relation to changes in the local price of real estate. As real estate prices go up, the painting on the right must be scaled up, as they depreciate, the painting must be downsized. These changes, of course, need not be the product of passive market forces; the charge-taker could renovate his house or let it fall to ruin; he might move to another neighbourhood, city, or country. In all cases, the relationship between the scale of the work and the environment in which it is housed and commodified is established and made explicit. Here, the scope of Rutault's interest is clearly in view. For while painting exclusively about painting often hazards sterility and solipsism, Rutault's practice acknowledges and expressly engages the full range of social and conceptual relations complicit with the creation, collection, display and appreciation of an artwork. By identifying painting not just with the application of paint to canvas, or the romantic cult of an expressive, inspired artist, but instead with an entire living, changing, normative social activity, Rutault allows for painting as painting in a climate where disparate arts and technologies make increasingly tenuous claims to its name.

Claude Rutault (b. 1941 in Trois-Moutiers, France) lives and works in La Celle St Cloud, outside of Paris. Since the 1970s, he has developed over 600 de-finitions/methods, many of which have been actualized in museums, galleries, private collections, and as public works. His work has been widely exhibited across Europe, with major solo exhibitions at the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland (2013), the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway (2002), the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1992), the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, Belgium (1988) and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France (1983). Rutault was included in recent international group exhibitions, including, "Theater of the World," Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, curated by Jean Hubert Martin (2012), the 3rd Moscow Biennale (2009), "ARTEMPO, Where Time Becomes Art" at Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy (2007), and "Premises," at the Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York, USA (1998). Rutault was also included in two consecutive editions of Documenta (1977 and 1982) in Kassel, Germany.

Claude Rutault's work can also be found in leading private and public collections in France and Europe, including SMAK Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Gand, Belgium; FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême; CAPC Musée d'art contemporain. Bordeaux; FRAC Pays de la Loire. Carquefou; FRAC Bretagne, Châteaugiron; Le Consortium, Dijon; FRAC Bourgogne. Dijon; FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkerque; FRAC Lorraine, Metz; Château d'Oiron; Espace de l'art concret, Mouans Sartoux; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; FNAC Fonds National d'Art Contemporain; MNAM Musée National d'Art moderne; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain de Strasbourg; Musée d'art moderne Lille métropole, Villeneuve d'Ascq; Mamco, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland.



de-finition/method #349. "obstacles and defenses, theme 53 of "from stack to stack" 1989-1990
Paint on canvas. Variable dimensions according to the actualisation
Photo: Antoine Cadot. Courtesy Galerie Perrotin

de-finition/method: the idea is that one stack or two facing stacks impede movement between two spaces, so that the viewer has to walk around or over them, and is, therefore, forced to slow down. the stack (or stacks) must not imitate an architectural element, piece of furniture, or other work of art in the space. if two stacks are placed on either side of a door, they must be different. they will be composed of canvases of various dimensions and will make it hard for two people to walk past each other. the canvases can be non-painted or painted.



de-finition/method #447. "full-length self-portrait" 2011
Paint on canvas. 168 x 110 cm + 33 x 22 cm / 66 1/4 x 43 1/4 inches+ 13 x 8 3/4 in.
Photo: Antoine Cadot. Courtesy Galerie Perrotin

de-finition/method: an oval canvas 168 x 110 cm (66 1/4 x 43 1/4 inches) is placed 50 cm (19 3/4 inches) in front of the wall. the canvas is non-painted. it is connected to the wall by a fine metal wire attached to its upper half. it is also attached to the floor. a second oval canvas, 33 x 22 cm (13 x 8 3/4 inches), is hung by its left side to the wall 60 cm (23 1/2 inches) from the floor, and is painted the same color as the wall. the large canvas is shown face-out as long as the artist is alive, and will be turned to face the wall when he dies.

PRESS CONTACTS

Natacha Polaert - Nouvelle Garde - natacha@nouvellegarde.com
Constance Gounod - Galerie Perrotin - constance@perrotin.com

Claude Rutault was born in 1941 in Trois-Moutiers (France). He lives and works in La Celle Saint-Cloud.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (Selection)

- 2015** “- de la peinture, sire ...”, permanent artwork commissioned for the pavilion Dufour, Château de Versailles, France
- 2014** Permanent work commissioned for the Lycée de l'île de Nantes, France
- 2013** “actualités de la peinture”, Galerie Perrotin, Paris; Permanent installation, Saint Restitut, France (programme Nouveaux Commanditaires with the help of Fondation de France)
“des histoires sans fin”, MAMCO, Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2011** “la traversée de la peinture”, Château d'Oiron, France; “bataille navale”, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France;
“exposition suicide”, Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France; “AMZ”, Centre des livres d'artistes, St Yrieix la Perche, France
- 2009** “vers le ciel de la peinture”, Le Creux de l'enfer, Thiers, France; “en peinture la vue ne suffit pas”, Galerie Marion Meyer, Paris, France
- 2008** “la peinture de claude rutault expose celle de jean gorin”, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France; “l'exposition continue”, Circuit and 1m3, Lausanne, Switzerland (travelled 2008-2010 at Reykjavik Museum, Island; CNEAI, Chatou, France)
- 2007** “La peinture fait des vagues”, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Brest, France
“Correspondances Georges Seurat / Claude Rutault”, Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France; Eglise de Saint Prim, France
- 2006** “(p)réparations”, MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2005** “Les toiles et l'archer”, Musée Bourdelle, Paris, France
- 2004** Galerie Martine et Thibault de La Châtre, Paris, France
- 2003** “d'après les saisons de nicolas poussin, repeindre”, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy, France; National Gallery of Iceland, Listasafan, Iceland
- 2002** Installation of “TRANSIT” at the Parc de la Villette, Paris, France; “la peinture photographe”, Atelier Brancusi - Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Bergen Kunstmuseum, Norway;
“pintura”, Pavillon Mies van der Rohe, Barcelona, Spain; “the painting in the same colour as the wall on which it is hung”, Astrup Featley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo, Norway
- 2000** “la vie en rose”, Villa Savoye (Le Corbusier), Poissy, France; “claude rutault chez dominique perrault”, Hotel Industriel Berlier, Paris, France
- 1998** “la peinture sort de sa réserve”, Musée d'Art Moderne, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France; FRAC Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France
“promenade”, Galerie Gilbert Brownstone, Paris, France
- 1997** Galerie Michel Rein, Tours, France; “promenade”, CCC de Tours, France
- 1995** “le creux de l'enfer”, Centre d'art contemporain, Thiers, France
- 1994** “à titre d'exemple”, musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes, France; “paso doble”, FAE Musée d'art contemporain, Pully and MAMCO, Geneva, Switzerland
- 1992** Le Consortium, Dijon, France; musée de Grenoble, France; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
“extraits” Musée d'art contemporain, Helsinki, Finland; “extraits” Musée municipal de Reykjavik, Iceland
- 1988** “claude rutault une toile un mur”, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent, Belgium
- 1987** FRAC des Pays de la Loire, Abbaye de Fontevraud, France; “AMZ”, Le Consortium, Dijon, France
- 1983** “claude rutault, exposition de peintures de “ ARC/Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France
- 1981** claude rutault, FRAC Rhône-Alpes, IAC, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne, France
- 1979** PS1 studio, New-York, USA; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles
- 1976** Galerie Paul Maenz, Cologne, Germany; Galerie Durand-Dessert, Paris, France
- 1974** Galerie 22, Paris, France; Jean Clavreul, Places des Vosges, Paris, France

GROUP EXHIBITIONS (Selection)

- 2014** “PANORAMIC AVE.”, Kunstsaele, Berlin, Germany
“Sol mur plafond”, Galerie Art & Essai, Université de Rennes, France
- 2013** “Une tradition matérielle”, FRAC Poitou-Charentes, Angoulême, France
“Théâtre du monde”, Maison Rouge, Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris, France
“Le CAPC a 40 ans”, CAPC, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Bordeaux, France
“Bonjour Monsieur Matisse !”, MAMAC, Nice, France
- 2012** “Theater of the World”, Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania (curated by Jean Hubert Martin)
- 2009** “contre l'exclusion”, 3rd Moscow Biennale, Moscow, Russia
- 2007** “ARTEMPO, Where Times Becomes Art”, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy
- 2002** “Claude Rutault and Mike Bidlo - Painting and Painting”, Kunstmuseum, Bergen, Norway
- 1998** “Premises”, Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York, USA
- 1994** “La perte de l'aura”, Weiner Secession, Vienne, Austria
- 1992** “Résistances”, Watari-Um Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan
- 1986** “Chambres d'amis”, SMAK, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium
- 1982** “Vision in disbelief”, Sydney Biennale, Australia
Documenta 7, Kassel, Germany (curated by Rudi Fuchs)
- 1977** Documenta 6, Kassel, Germany (curated by Manfred Schneckenburger)
- 1975** Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France



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