

**CLAUDE RUTAULT**

*“ exhibition-suicide ”*

**GALERIE  
EMMANUEL  
PERROTIN**

**dm 292: exhibition-suicide 2**

definition/method:

as with all the definitions/methods, updating one of them only lasts as long as the exhibition. when moved, it is not only the frame that changes but also the actual painting, which at the very least will be repainted in a new colour. my paintings have short lives but many lives.

*exhibition-suicide 2* uses as its medium the amputated part of the canvas in *exhibition-suicide 1*. it is painted the same colour as the wall on which it hangs, in the tradition of all definitions/methods. this painting will only be exhibited on the day of the opening, no matter what. it will be taken down at the close of the first day of exhibition. either the painting will have been purchased and the taker can immediately take possession of it, or it will have found no taker and be destroyed forthwith. the empty space will then be filled by a small canvas painted the same colour as the wall, *dm interim no. 145 B* (1985)

**dm 291: exposition-suicide 1**

definition/method:

the year of this painting's exhibition, 2011, is the year when its survival or disappearance will be decided.

the proposal resides strictly within the pictorial register — braced on a stretcher — that takes the canvas, once barely painted, into a story that eludes it. the canvas measures 63 3/4 x 44 3/4 inches. a large irregular surface has been amputated from its upper left-hand part. the canvas is painted the same colour as the wall and hung in the most classical fashion.

the canvas will only be exhibited once, the duration of the exhibition is irrelevant. if sold during the exhibition, it will continue its life and, like most de-finitions/methods, will be periodically repainted the same colour as the wall on which it hangs.

if, however, by the last day of the exhibition it does not find a taker, it will be destroyed that evening.

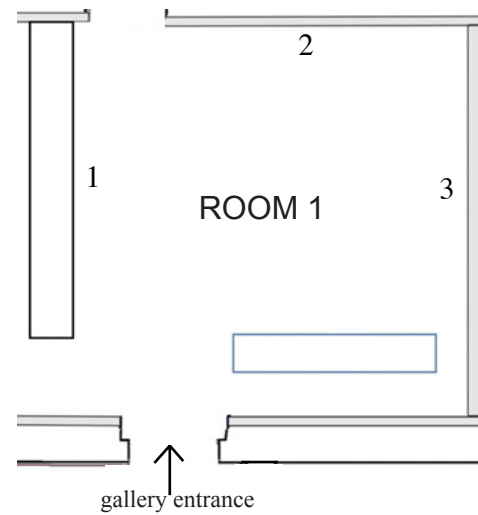
**dm 178: nothing to read**

definition/method:

for each updating, which differs from one site to the next, there is a succession of canvases, all the same height, 4 inches, but all different lengths. these canvases fill the entire breadth of the wall, follow one after the other with no particular arrangement, on several lines, close together, obliging the eye to approach them as though reading them but without it being possible to evoke any word or sentence. they are all painted the same colour as the wall.

there are no words, no sentences. the result is at once akin to what happens when you read a text and similar to a gaze travelling over a painting, except here the eye is obliged to go beyond the painting in question, even though it is in parts, to see the wall as it goes from one canvas to the next.

if the taker wishes to change the dimensions of the paintings, this can be done in agreement with the artist.



1

**definition/method 292: exhibition-suicide**

2, 2010

paint on canvas

63 3/4 x 22 1/2 inches



this painting of same color as the wall on which it is hung, will be sold by the end of the opening of the exhibition or it will be destroyed.

2

**definition/method 291: exhibition-suicide**

1, 2010

paint on canvas

63 3/4 x 44 3/4 inches



this painting of same color as the wall on which it is hung, will be sold by the end of the exhibition or it will be destroyed.

3

**definition/method 178: nothing to read,**

1990

paint on canvas

installation 36 x 159.8 inches (38 paintings at 3.9 x 15.7, 3.9 x 11.8 x 3.9 x 7.9, 3.9 x 3.9 inches)  
(variable according to the actualisation)



an installation of several lines of small canvases of different formats, all painted in the same color as the wall on which they are hung. the lines form an inarticulate sentence.

**dm 182: small and big version**

definition/method:

configuration to be realized with a minimum of 6 canvases, 3 rectangular canvases (standard formats), one square canvas, one round canvas and one oval canvas.

the canvases are freely arranged, bunched together, in a fashion elaborated by the taker. this first configuration is realized using medium format canvases.

a second configuration is identical to the first except that it is realized using small formats, hung some way apart on the same wall. This painting has no vocation to be alone on the wall.

the canvases in both versions are painted the same colour as the wall.

**dm 189: at number 189 we sell**

definition/method:

auction of a lot of 40 painted white canvases measuring 47 1/4 x 47 1/4 inches, presented stacked in a pile, face up. The actual auction process will determine the form of the work. the auctioneer announces the customary auction rules, the starting price and the amount of each bid. he then announces the auction process: at the start of the auction the stack is comprised of 40 canvases. with every bid, a canvas is removed from the stack. when the stack is left with 3 canvases, the number of canvases does not change no more. afterwards, the bids may continue but the stack remains with the 3 canvases. the taker, who placed the highest bid, keeps the final stack of at least three canvases. the canvases removed from the stack revert to the artist storage. the resale of the work may be made according to the same conditions.

**dm 290: the jinxed stack**

definition/method:

6 stacks of canvases piled against the wall fill it entirely. the space between the stacks varies in relation to the length of the wall. all the stacks differ in terms of the number of canvases, their forms, dimensions, composition. only the order of the canvases within each stack can be modified. the canvases are prepared in white,

except for one, painted another colour. none of the canvases are hung on the wall.

process.

on first purchase, the taker owns 6 piles. he installs the work in the place of his choice. he can change the colour of the canvases in one or another of the stacks if he wishes, but there can only ever be one coloured canvas per stack, a different colour for each one.

with each re-sale, a stack is removed from the work. the new taker chooses the pile to be removed. this pile is bequeathed to a museum chosen at the moment of first purchase in mutual agreement between the taker and the artist. if a museum is not immediately found, the stack is put on hold, conserved as is by the artist.

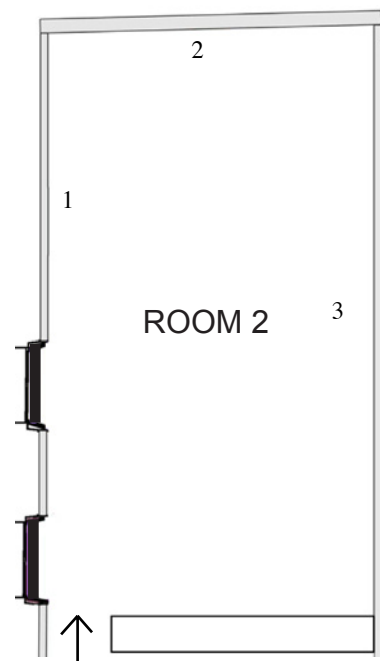
back to the hypothesis of 6 stacks. the first taker owns all 6, the second only owns 5, the third 4, the fourth 3, the fifth 2. at the sixth re-sale, the seller has only one stack, the museum has 5. the new and also ultimate taker cannot resell the work because there are no stacks left to remove.

the process regains, after this roundabout meander, a constant in the nature of an art work, i.e., that its value is not so much linked to its rarity as to its exceptional nature.

the last purchaser becomes the head of the game. he owns the marginal stack, without which the work remains incomplete. for the last stack to join the 5 others in the museum, a person undertaking must be found who agrees to purchase the last pile to donate it to the museum, thus depriving himself of the exclusive enjoyment of his purchase.

thanks to this person undertaking, the last stack is no longer jinxed. in this way this phantom purchaser becomes the donator who restores the work's integrity.

at the museum, the notice featuring the list of successive donators becomes the new title of this painting,



1

**definition/method 182: small and big version, 1991**

**10 painted canvases**

**79.7 x 69.7 inches + 28.1 x 26.6 inches**



2 compositions, identical by shape but of different dimensions, composed of canvases painted the same color as the wall on which they are hung. The installation plays with the idea of perspective.

2

**definition/method 189: at number 189 we sell, 1988**

**1 stack of 40 painted canvases**

**47 1/4 x 47 1/4 inches (x40) (before the auction)**



a stack of 40 white painted canvases leaned against the wall is sold at auction. The stack shrinks, canvas after canvas, as the successive bids raise its price.

3

**definition/method 290: the jinxed stack, 2010**

**6 stacks of 10 painted canvases**

**Installation 76.8 x 285.8 x 16.9 inches (stacks between 19.3 x 19.3 x 11.8 inches and 76.8 x 50.4 x 15 inches)**



6 stacks of canvases of different color, shape and size piled against the wall. At each resale, while the work changes hands, a stack enters a museum collection. The work shrinks over time with its successive resales, to reconcile private art market and public collections. After 6 resales, the 6 stacks composing the work are reunited and enters the museum collection definitely.

**dm 301: canvas against the wall, mondrian 3**

definition/method:

a number of canvases painted by mondrian in paris or london were afterwards altered by the artist in new york. these modifications entailed adding little squares or strips of colour at the edge of the canvases.

example: la place de la concorde, painted in paris in 1938. the canvas was signed with this date, which seems to indicate that for mondrian the painting was finished. we know that mondrian added dashes of colour in 1943. since no photographic document exists, we can only hypothesise.

this is the subject of mondrian 3. a 94 cm x 95 cm canvas, the stretcher reproducing in wood the black lines of the painting. the canvas is painted the same colour as the wall and hung orthogonally as in the dm 254 canvas against the wall. on the adjacent wall, not far from the corner, the additions probably made in new york to the painting painted in paris are placed in the spots where they are found on mondrian's painting. they are materialised by coloured papers, respecting mondrian's colours as closely as possible. they follow the rule of the dm 34 papers, the paper is coloured when the wall is white and white when the wall is not.

**dm 295: blind painting**

definition/method:

through the series of definitions/methods of 1985, checkerboard dm 184, naval battle dm 185...conundrum dm 188, board game-type games were conceived that gave form to a painting, but the artist did not play. why not reverse the proposal? the person undertaking constructs the work and the artist must guess the updating.

the painting is composed of two canvases, one square, the other round, for a starting price of x. the person undertaking goes into the prepared room alone, no-one but him can know what the updating is. he installs the canvases, already painted, as he wishes. first he chooses the order of the paintings, round then square or square then round. next, one canvas must be hung face forwards, the other facing the wall. first phase. from the next door room, the artist must guess if the first canvas hung, the one on the left, is the round canvas or the square canvas. if he gets it wrong, the price x agreed before the game is reduced by 50%. if he gets it right, it is increased by 50%.

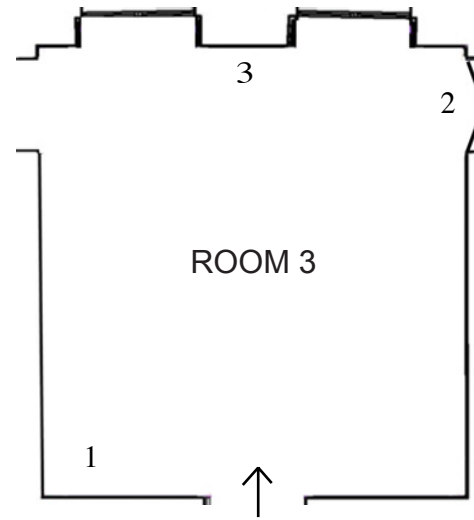
the price of the work is only known at the end of the two phases of the game, in which the person undertaking and the artist will have taken the same risks.

**definition/method 172: from stack to stack, tenth theme: two rows**

definition/method:

two stacks made up of the same elements, one in good order, like in a parade, the other disordered. at the end of the updating the taker will be able to change the forms and dimensions of the canvases, as is possible in many de-finitions/methods.

but we then have to define what is order and what is disorder, is order impeccable and tidy? is disorder forcibly a heap? should order, for example, be deemed that which is not reproducible? does a non-reproducible stack exist?



1

**definition/method 301: canvas against the wall, mondrian 3, 2010**

canvas, paper

40.6 x 40.2 inches (canvas), 25.6 x 37.2 inches (paper)



The work refers to Mondrian's 1938 painting 'La Place de la Concorde'. Rutault's canvas is hung face to the wall. Its stretcher bars mimmick Mondrian's black lines and paper pieces are placed on the adjacent wall according to the coloured zones added in NY to the original composition .

2

**definition/method 295: blind painting, 2010**

2 painted canvases

19.7 x 19.7 inches (x2)

2 paintings are locked down in a room. The person undertaking buys the work without having seen it. He then enters the room and installs the canvases. The artist must guess how the work has been installed. The stake is the price of the work.

3

**definition/method 172: from stack to stack, tenth theme: two rows, 1989-1990**

2 stacks of 8 raw canvases

19.7 x 19.7 inches each



Two stacks made up of the same elements, one in good order, the other disordered.



**dm 311: painting-puzzle 5, endless**

definition/method:

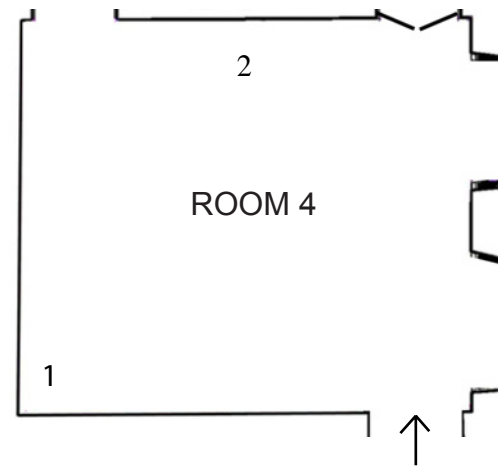
a succession of irregular forms that never quite fit together, letting the wall be seen between them. they nonetheless have very precise points of contact. the hanging is left to the discretion of the taker, either in a single block, or else several groups. one piece can even stand alone. all the pieces are painted the same colour as the wall on which they are hung.

**dm 172: from stack to stack, fifty-seventh theme: hanging up**

definition/method:

a minimum of 4 square canvases in different sizes. they are suspended from the ceiling to form a stack hanging in space. the stack is either hung very high or very low, in which case the canvases are left raw, or it is hung at the usual height of a painting and is painted the same colour as the wall.

the height at which the stack of tightly piled canvases is hung can evoke old moments in painting. the idea came when looking at the rapture of st paul by nicolas poussin



2

**definition/method 172: from stack to stack, fifty-seventh theme : hanging up, 1989-1990**

**4 painted canvases  
23 1/2 x 9 3/4 x 6 inches**



4 canvases suspended from the ceiling to form a stack hanging in space, referencing «The Rapture of St Paul» by Nicolas Poussin.

1

**definition/method 311: painting-puzzle 5, endless, 1977-2009**

**18 painted wooden panels  
(31,5 x 31,5 inches each)  
126.4 x 342.5 inches, dimensions variable according to actualization**



a succession of irregularly shaped paintings, like pieces of a puzzle. They are painted the same colour as the wall on which they are hung. The pieces never quite fit together, letting the wall be seen between them.

### **dm 108 B: série noire**

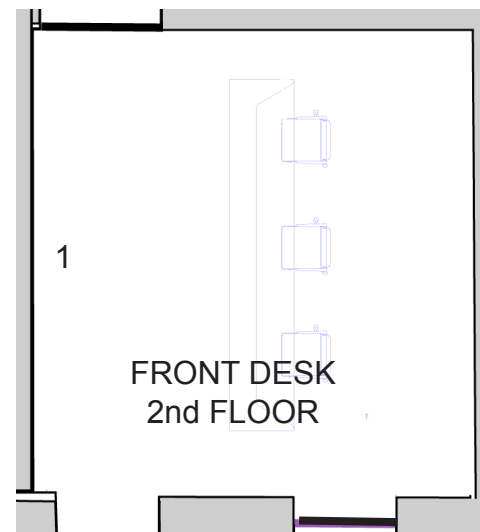
definition/method:

undertaking this definition/method entails purchasing the numbers of the série noire (french crime novel collection) that have a title, and in some cases more than the title, that relates to painting. this choice of 198 titles has its own logic that plays on unexpected registers.

initially, the person undertaking purchases the first 37 numbers, the hardback copies of the early years, selected from numbers 1 to 413 of the famous collection. these volumes go with 37 canvases of the same dimension as the books, 18 cm x 12 cm. books and canvases are kept in a specially designed wall shelving unit. the canvases are painted like the wall, in black. the person undertaking can therefore initially hang on the wall a maximum of half the canvases from the shelf. at which point they receive a certificate.

from this point on, the person undertaking sets about looking for the next lot of titles.\* he adds the status of bibliophile to that of person undertaking a painting. the canvases are supplied as and when by the artist. when everything has been assembled, the artist provides a full description of the work, the books and the canvases. with the work now complete, the use of the canvases changes nature. the taker owns 179 canvases which he can disperse in several spaces. there must always be at least half of the canvases in stock. the canvases must be the same colour as the wall, some will be repainted in relation to the colour of the walls they will encounter, then repainted again in black when they return to their shelf. the books stay together, to be read or re-read. a complete description is then provided, listing not just the titles, but also how to use the work and the different games that can be played through it.

\* the artist gives the person undertaking a list of addresses where the majority of the titles can easily be found.



have a connection to painting. He also becomes a bibliophile. For each added book comes a painting. The work is complete when the libraries reach 179 books and 179 matching paintings.

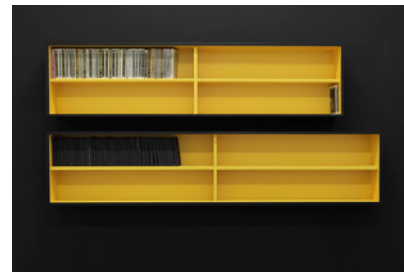
1

**definition/method 108 B: série noire, 1978-2010**

**2 wooden bookshelves, books, painted canvases**

**18 1/4 inches x 6 feet x 7 1/2 inches +**

**18 1/4 inches x 6 4/5 feet x 7 1/2 inches**



2 libraries, one containing 37 issues of the série noire whose title relate to painting, the other 37 black paintings of the same format. The person undertaking is responsible for completing the book collection with all the other issues of the series that

**dm 258 B: puppets**

definition/method:

a minimum of 5 canvases, painted different colours and not excluding black or white, are hung from the ceiling on discreet metal wires. the only colour excluded is the colour of walls of the room in which they are hung.

the canvases all have a point of contact with the ground. an angle suffices, the canvases, which are all different, are more or less vertical, more or less horizontal, but none are laid flat on the ground.

**dm 208 C: painted, unpainted, repainted**

definition/method:

three paintings if possible of the same dimensions, hung close to each other, in a precise order.

the first painting is left as such. the second is ripped off, i.e. that the color coats have been taken off and the raw canvas lies open. the last canvas is repainted the same color as the wall. from the realization on these three paintings become inseparable. at each new installation the third canvas is repainted the same color as the wall.



painting before being scratched, 1971

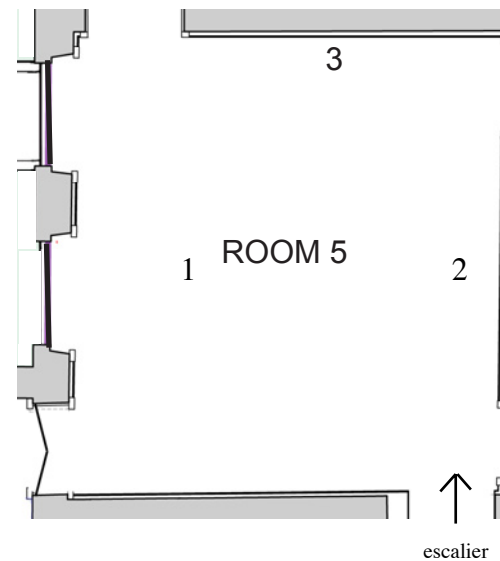


painting before being repainted, 1962

**dm 310: painting-grave**

definition/method:

a stack of raw canvases at the artist's body dimensions leans against the wall. The stack is installed upright as long as the artist lives and lying on the floor, parallel to the wall, when he passes away. the canvas on top of the pile is presented with its stretcher visible. it is turned over at the artist's death.



1

**definition/method 258 B: puppets, 1994**

6 painted canvases

variable dimensions according to the actualisation (39.4 x 19.7, 25.6 x 21.3, 19.7 x 19.7, 19.7 x 19.7, 23.6 x 23.6 inches)



6 paintings of different colours hang from the ceiling on discreet metal wires. They rest on the floor as little as possible, bringing to mind drowsy puppets.

2

**definition/method 208 C: painted, unpainted, repainted, 1962-2011**

2 paintings on canvas and 1 painting on wood

25.4 x 103.9 inches (details 19.7 x 25.4 + 25.4 x 37.6 + 29.1 x 24 inches)



a triptych of medium size paintings. The first canvas is painted. The second-unpainted- is a 1971 painting by Claude Rutault the artist scratches the colour coats off to make the raw canvas reappear. The third -repainted- canvas from 1962 is painted the same colour as the wall. At each new installation, the third canvas is repainted the same color as the wall.

3

**definition/method 310: painting-grave, 2001**

12 raw canvases

65 x 19.7 x 17.7 inches or 19.7 x 65 x 17.7 inches



a stack of raw canvases at the artist's body dimensions leans against the wall. The stack is installed upright as long as the artist lives and lying on the floor, parallel to the wall, when he passes away.

the canvas on top of the pile is presented with its stretcher visible. it is turned over at the artist's death.

**dm 304: letter to doctor barnes**

definition/method:

doctor barnes had a principle of demanding rigorous and symmetrical picture hanging, which sometimes created unexpected parallels. they were interspersed with objects that had apparently nothing to do with painting, elements of ironwork and silverwork...furniture, diverse objects, mixtures of styles, culture, eras, all with a didactic goal for openness and confrontation.

without claiming this as a work with all the space for itself, without playing the game of a mixture of several pictorial styles, I keep very close to my initial proposal, a canvas braced on a stretcher painted the same colour as the wall on the one hand, and canvas against the wall on the other.

1. undertake a classical hanging, 6 or 8 canvases depending on the size of the wall, "almost" symmetrical with a few discreet but perceptible slants.

2. this hanging is interspersed in "almost" regular fashion with small canvases in various forms and formats, painted the same colour as the wall and hung following the principle of the *dm 254* canvas against the wall. 1994.

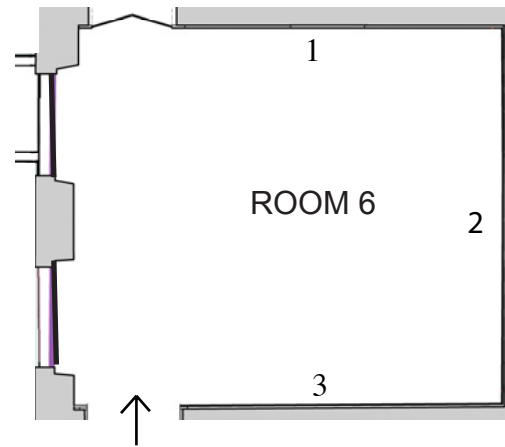
**dm 128: wood panelling**

definition/method:

the lower section of the walls in one of the rooms in a house or a museum is covered by standard canvases. the height of the section is variable. relatively rare nowadays, this horizontal cut in the wall could form a painting sufficient to fill the space. modifying the place with a painting and canvases this way, however, transcends a reductive approach. it places the space in an unspecified past. the era will be that of the work actualized in the section of the wall left open.

the canvases, lower wall, are named paintings. they bring the old wood panelling to life. they are either left raw or painted the same colour as the wall.

they are part of the work that they present, they are joined with it, retaining their memories but also open to a painting that will never end. as often, it is the painting of today that justifies the painting of the past, not the contrary.



1

**definition/methode 304: letter to doctor barnes, 2010**

**paint on canvas**

**15 paintings from 3.9 x 3.9 inches to 31.5 x 31.5 inches, installation according to the actualisation**

2

**definition/method 128: wood panelling, 1982**

**paint on canvas**

**51.6 inches x length of the walls of a room**



the lower section of the walls in one of the rooms in a house or a museum is covered by standard canvases. They are painted the same colour as the wall. These paintings bring the old wood panelling to life. As often, it is the painting of today that justifies the painting of the past, not the contrary.

3

**definition/method 305: photography is but the shadow of painting. or painting puts photography in the shade, 2010**

**paint on canvas, photograph photograph 35.4 x 49.6 inches + painting 28.7 x 45.7 inches**

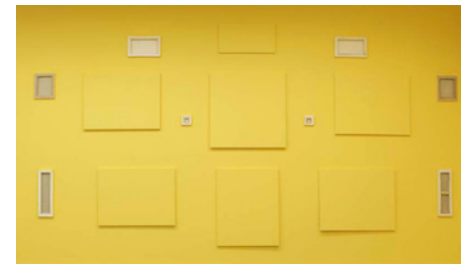


a canvas painted the same colour as the wall on which it is hung almost entirely covers a photograph that is bigger than the canvas. The photograph is in b/w if the wall is colour, in colour if the wall is white. The choice of the photograph: the photograph of the wall opposite to the work during its first presentation, or after its sale, the photograph of the person undertaking's wall, whether empty or with works on display.

**dm 305: photography is but the shadow of painting. or painting puts photography in the shade**

definition/method:

a canvas painted the same colour as the wall on which it is hung almost entirely covers a photograph that is bigger than the canvas. the photograph is in black and white if the wall is colour, in colour if the wall is white. the idea of a banal, quick photograph printed on ordinary paper. the choice of the photograph: the photograph of the wall opposite to the work during its first presentation, or after its sale, the photograph of the person undertaking's wall, whether empty or with works on display.



The Barnes collection, a well-known impressionist art collection, had a principle of demanding rigorous and symmetrical picture hanging. The paintings were also interspersed with various objects, with a didactic goal for openness and confrontation. Here, the installation of the canvases painted the same colour as the wall- yellow like at the Barnes collection- takes up these 2 characteristics: symmetry and density on the one hand and the mix of small and large elements on the other.



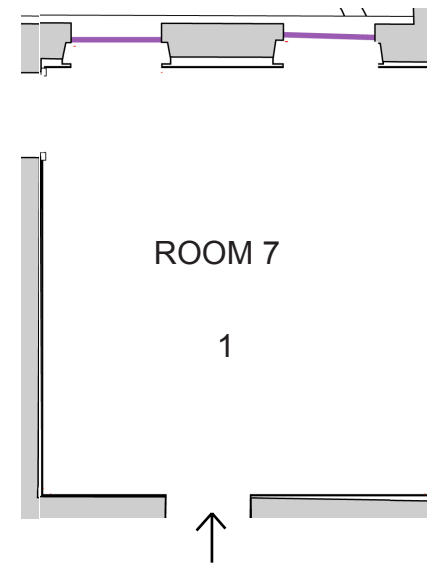


**dm 309: 1973-2011 or journey to tokyo**

definition/method:

in an exhibition room or a private space a stack of canvases, very thin. between 3 and 6 canvases are arranged on the floor so as to make it easy to walk around. all the canvases are painted. just one colour per stack. only one colour is excluded, the colour of the wall.

at each end of the most visible wall in the room are two canvases of horizontal format, both the same dimension. facing the wall, the canvas on the left is painted the same colour as the wall and hung 11.8 inches above the floor. the canvas on the right is left raw and simply placed against the wall. 1973.....2011

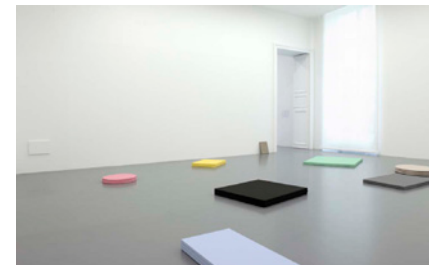


1

**definition/method 309: 1973-2011 or journey to tokyo, 1992**

**9 piles of 2-3 paintings dispersed on the floor, 1 painted canvas, 1 raw canvas**

**paintings dispersed on the floor (17,3 x 13 inches + 39,3 x 39,3 inches), 2 paintings 13 x 9,4 inches)**



stacks of canvases are arranged on the floor so as to make it easy to walk around. All the canvases are painted. Just one colour per stack. The work was inspired by Yasujiro Ozu's masterpiece «Voyage à Tokyo» (1953).

**dm 318: in painting everyone positions their pawns**

definition/method:

The work is composed of 2 identical stacks split between two art collections. the stacks are composed of 25 round canvases, all of the same size that may vary between 10 and 20 cm. each collector gets one stack and installs it amongst other works from his collection. the canvases are piled, layed flat on a shelf. they are painted the same colour as the wall. The work starts existing once both stacks are installed.

the principle is the following: if the person undertaking «a» purchases a new work for his collection, he has to donate one round canvas to the other person undertaking «b». the same goes for «b». if «a» sells a work from his collection, he has to receive one round canvas from «b» and the same goes for «b». during the game the paintings are not repainted and the collectors have to donate works from their original piles prioritarily, causing the piles to get mixed up. it is probable that «a» and «b» do not collect at the same track and overtime one might end up owning the two stacks. this can become the stake, for both of them. however the game ends when one of them only has one canvas left. the work starts a new life of its own. the person undertaking hangs on the wall the remaining painting, that he repaints the same colour as the wall and leaves the shelf empty. the other one with the 49 canvases left keeps them stacked on the shelf and repaints them the colour of his wall. he has to keep a pile of at least 25 canvases that consitute the capital, the others can be extracted from the pile and hung on different walls. they will be repainted the same colour as the walls.

**dm 308: portrait of . . . . . by édouard manet. claude rutault**

definition/method:

a canvas 57.5 x 44.9 inches painted the same colour as the wall and hung at 45.3 inches in line with it. as for all the de-finitions/ methods since 1973, the taker chooses the colour of the wall, especially as this is their portrait. at the top right of the canvas a 15.7 x 21.7 inches, white if the canvas is colour and coloured if the canvas is white, following the rule for the dm 34: papers. on this sheet, 3 slightly overlapping sheets that almost cover it. the colour of each sheet always abides by the dm 34.

installed 19.7 inches away from the wall, encroaching on the canvas by about 11.8 inches, are double mobile canvases, dm 60. 4 sheets, 76.8 x 23.6 inches the side facing the viewer is painted the same colour as the wall, the other side faces the wall and is left raw.

on the canvas between the large sheet of paper and plumb with the double canvases a 11.8 x 7.9 inches photograph of the taker is fixed. the taker has a photograph of his choice taken. the photograph is coloured if the canvas is white and black and white if the canvas is not.

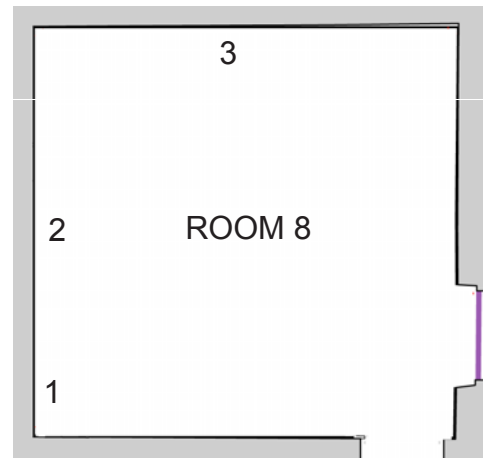
prior to there being a taker, the photograph is of the artist.



**dm 307: un samedi matin à l'île de la grande jatte, or elsewhere**

definition/method:

taking the painting by seurat as a reference, creation of a frame using canvases around the absent work. this frame has several gaps in order to form the lightest rectangle possible. it is made up of canvases, round, oval, square or rectangular. the canvases have different dimensions but are always small format. all these canvases are painted the same colour as the wall.



1

**definition/method 318: in painting everyone positions their pawns, 2010**

**2 stacks of 25 painted canvases**  
**25 1/2 x 8 3/4 x 8 3/4 inches (x2)**



The work is composed of 2 identical stacks of 25 round canvases each, initially split between two persons undertaking. Each person undertaking installs his stack amongst other works from his collection. When person undertaking «a» buys a new work for his collection, he has to donate a round canvas to person undertaking «b». The same goes for «b». When person undertaking «a» sells a work from his collection, he has to receive a round canvas from person undertaking «b». The same goes for «b». The piles vary and the game ends when one of them has 49 canvases and the other just one left.

2

**definition/method 308: portrait of . . . . . by édouard manet. claude rutault, 1986**  
**paint on canvas, paper, photograph**  
**57 1/2 x 44 3/4 inches + screen 76.8 x 23.6 inches**



taking as a starting point the 1868 painting «le portrait d'Emile Zola» by Edouard Manet, a canvas identical in size is painted the same colour as the wall on which it is hung. Papers pinned to the painting reproduce the original work's imagery. Double mobile canvases, painted the same colour as the wall, stand on the floor and mimic the screens of Manet's composition. Zola's face is replaced by a picture of the artist, that will be replaced by a photograph of the person undertaking.

3

**definition/method 307: un samedi matin à l'île de la grande jatte, or elsewhere, 2010**

**24 painted canvases**  
**8.4 x 11.7 feet**



taking the painting by Seurat as a reference, creation of a frame using small canvases around the absent work. This frame has several gaps in order to form the lightest rectangle possible. All these canvases are painted the same colour as the wall.

## Claude Rutault «exposition-suicide», from January 8th to February 12th, 2010

I am delighted to announce **Claude Rutault's first personal exhibition from January 8 to February 12 in my gallery**. The exhibition will bring together 23 works in 10 rooms in the gallery. Historical works from the 1970s in particular ("definition-method 208c paint, repaint, repaint", "definition/method 98. to be continued") and nine new works will be presented for the occasion. It is a new stage in a story between Claude and I that goes back 20 years.

I met Claude Rutault in 1987 thanks to Dominique Pasqualini, a member of Information Fiction Publicité (IFP), a group of artists who currently present a retrospective at Mamco in Geneva. I was a young gallery assistant and Claude Rutault's work opened me up to conceptual art, although Claude Rutault doesn't see himself as a conceptual artist, but as a painter (which no longer surprises me, because Bernard Frize doesn't see himself as a painter). Back in 1989 already, I offered to computerise Claude Rutault's archives. **In 1992, I offered to organise an exhibition. Rutault kindly refused both proposals.** Finally, twenty years later, in September 2010, Claude agreed to a group exhibition. Having renewed our collaboration it seemed obvious to prolong it with a personal exhibition. **I would like to enable Rutault's work to be understood and circulated on the international scene with the same critical and institutional success that he enjoys in France. At the end of the exhibition, the gallery will publish the first monograph of the artist in English.**

Claude Rutault's work is elaborated **with a vocabulary that was established in 1973 in definition/method 1, 'a canvas braced on a stretcher, painted the same colour as the wall on which it is hung. All commercially available formats can be used, be they rectangular, square, round or oval.'** The identity of the canvas colour with the wall has led to development of a corpus of over 300 definitions/methods. Rutault's texts form the instructions of an evolving work that is 'updated' by its 'taker' (collector, museum...). In an absolute gesture, all of Rutault's paintings prior to 1973 have been entirely repainted following the same principle. The artist has broken away from the strict colour identity between the canvas and the wall by taking his paintings away from the wall: canvases are stacked, placed on the floor or up against the picture rails...

**Rutault's works integrate the market dimension of art and do not hesitate to draw inspiration from it. In this way, definition/method 189: at number 189 we sell**, 1988, is defined by its very selling process. The auction conducted by Christie's on the day of the opening will involve a stack of 40 white canvases. **With each bid, one canvas from the stack will be removed** and go to "TRANSIT", a storage space for 'mediums that have served or will serve to update or re-update existing definitions/methods.' It is the auction process that will define the composition of the work. The higher the price rises, the smaller the work becomes. Another work, composed of six stacks of paintings, **definition/method 290: the jinxed stack**, 2010, changes with every subsequent sale of the piece. Stack after stack, **with each resale the work will join a museum collection, playing on the reconciliation between private collections and museum collections, and the frustration artists experience every time a work is resold.** Rauschenberg will thus be avenged by Claude Rutault's mischief.

Claude Rutault is creating **two new suicide paintings** for the exhibition, evoking the eight suicide paintings of 1978. These canvases painted the same colour as the wall on which they hang will only be exhibited once. **definition/method 291: exhibition-suicide 1** will be destroyed if it has not found a taker by the last day of the exhibition. **definition/method 292: exhibition-suicide 2**, will be taken down at the end of the first day of the exhibition: either the canvas will have been purchased and the taker will take immediate possession of it, or it will not have been purchased and will be immediately destroyed.

**definition/method 295: blind painting, 2010**, is equally radical. The rule is that the work stays in a locked room. The only person allowed to go inside the room will have bought the work without seeing it. They can imagine its definitive form. 'The person undertaking constructs the work and the artist has to guess its updating' from behind the door. The stake behind this mystery is the price of the work, multiplied or divided by two. The artist no longer determines the work's configuration and it is chance that decides the price. **definition/method 311: painting-puzzle 5, endless and definition/method 258 B: puppets**, partake in the same iconoclastic, playful spirit.

**definition/method 108 B: série noire**, 1978-2010, forms a countdown collection which, paradoxically, is finished. 'initially the person undertaking purchases the first 37 of the série noire crime novel collection whose title, and in some cases more than the title, relates to painting. he then sets about looking for the rest of these titles. this choice of 179 titles has its own logic that plays on unexpected registers.'

Claude Rutault keeps a discussion going with art history. **definition/method 301: canvas against the wall, Mondrian 3, 2010**, refers to Mondrian's painting 'La Place de la Concorde' 1938. Rutault's stretcher bars mimick Mondrian's well known black lines and paper pieces on the adjacent wall are placed according to the coloured zones of the original composition. Two other works present in the show, **definition/method 307: a saturday morning on ile de la grande jatte, or elsewhere**, 2010, and **definition/method 308: portrait of.....by edouard manet. claud rutault**, 1986, use the works of Georges Seurat and Edouard Manet as starting points.

**Claude Rutault has had a highly important role in art in France since the 1970s.** He has inspired numerous contemporary artists. He formulates a critical analysis of the art world, founded on the social operation between the work and the artist, their gallery, the collector, the museum and now the auction house. The scenarios Rutault writes do not become works until they are undertaken. **definition/method 318: in painting everyone positions their pawns**, 2010, highlights the social play-off between collectors who share a work. Two collectors together purchase two stacks of round canvases. Each puts their stack with their other works. They exchange these canvases as and when acquisitions and sales occur in their respective collections.

**The title of this exhibition is "exhibition suicide". Beyond the reference to the whole game in the French art world that expects exhibiting at the Galerie Perrotin to be suicidal in relation to Claude Rutault's public, this violent title reminds us that the definitions/methods are the medium for a non-finished work that can also lead to its own disappearance. definition/method 310: painting-grave, 2001, introduces the idea of the artist's physical disappearance by changing form on the day of his death. This issue and these black works are treated with great humour and distance. This renders a new interpretation of this title possible, a reference to a new departure, a renaissance.**

Emmanuel Perrotin