

STEPHEN WIRTZ GALLERY

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Contact: Julie Casemore
(415) 433-6879, julie@wirtzgalleries.com

RICK ARNTIZ

Pieces

Exhibition dates: June 7 – July 14, 2007

Opening reception for the artist Thursday, June 7, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Stephen Wirtz Gallery announces *Pieces*, an exhibition of new paintings by Rick Arnitz.

Presented are eight works on canvas and panel featuring new variations on his definitive technique. Arnitz wields a household paint roller in place of a brush to apply repeated layers of oil enamel paint, producing what the artist terms “semi-abstract” works with a dynamic but materially grounded optical effect.

While Arnitz restricts himself to using only a paint roller, recent works defy preconceived expectations of the artist. Paintings in the installation indicate an expanded social context, and the imagery in each work is varied and startlingly unique, with some surprising twists. One piece is in the shape of an inverted triangle; others appropriate iconic symbols, including the American flag. In some cases, Arnitz has used commonly recognizable shapes to mask areas of the painting and organize the anarchic energy of the marks beneath. In others titles and words appear that suggest enigmatic associations buried beneath the layers of his signature repeated roller marks.

Arnitz’s paintings are audacious and rife with visual puns and multiple associations that reference recent events—from the attacks of 9/11 to the fear and images of destruction associated with the Iraq war. Homage is paid to art historical antecedents such as Gustav Courbet, Rene Magritte Jasper Johns, and Phillip Guston. In Arnitz’s process-oriented approach, line can morph into both literal and metaphorical landscape, simultaneously suggesting both the Iraqi desert and the exaggerated anxiety that characterizes our current culture. Arnitz extols the virtue inherent in the immediacy and emotion of paint and advocates a place for painting in the polemic for visual truth.

RICK ARNITZ (b. St. Louis, MO) received a B.A., M.A. and M.F.A. from the University of California, Berkeley. His work has been exhibited widely in the Bay Area since 1975, including a solo exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1989, and is included in numerous private and public collections including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the San Jose Museum of Art, the Berkeley Art Museum, and the Oakland Museum of California.

Stephen Wirtz Gallery is located at 49 Geary St., 3rd Fl., San Francisco, CA 94108, (415) 433-6879. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday, 9:30-5:30, Saturday 10:30-5:30.