

DAVID NOLAN GALLERY

Julia Fish

Threshold/s with Hearth

recent paintings and a site intervention

Richard Artschwager

Interiors

March 10 - April 16, 2022

David Nolan Gallery is pleased to present the concurrent exhibitions: new paintings and a site-specific installation by Julia Fish entitled *Threshold/s with Hearth* and a solo presentation of work by Richard Artschwager, *Interiors*.

Julia Fish's continued investigation into the architecture of her home and studio in Chicago provides the provisional context for the works on view. The titles of the paintings are rife with architectural reference: 'plan' suggesting the diagrammatic, intricate renderings relate to some three-dimensional 'threshold', the barrier of entry or exit between two individualized spaces, which becomes a whole. These signifiers are certainly clues, but to understand Fish's practice means to decode the motifs, theories of color and light at play that are uniquely her own, allowing her to reverse engineer the construction of space. Fish subverts traditional architectural protocol, working from realized object to blueprint; the goal is not to create a facsimile that is purely accurate in a mathematical and logistical sense, but one that is subjective and intimate to reconstitute and expand the definitions of a 'studio', a 'home'. In the wake of the pandemic lockdowns where periods of confinement prompted a heightened awareness of the place we call home, the works on view feel particularly potent and affecting.

Fish's exploration of chromatic spectra considers the issue of perception: the basic, foundational concept that colors are relational and define one another. Tonal gradation and complimentary placement create harmony and tension respectively. Fish harnesses the coding potential of color to represent directional, designated space and in effect, light. The complex systems embedded in Fish's schematic paintings act as a key or a visual language. A demonstrated interest in processional narrative of the Renaissance *predella*, the multi-panel paintings of an altarpiece, where words fail and images communicate a sequence of events and passage of time, informs the structure and function of the works on view. In translating walls, floors, thresholds and the bricks and matter they are comprised of, Fish's works both boom and whisper with synergistic melody. The reference to 'scores', the musical equivalent of a 'plan', recalls the rhythm and optical vibration that would invigorate Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie Woogie* (1942-43). The canvases pulse as they delineate into upper and lower registers.

The 'Hearth project', conceptualized and realized by the artist, follows a thread of site-specificity inherent to all of Fish's work. The gallery's move to the Upper East Side in 2020 created opportunities for provocative installations that considered the relationship of the distinct architecture of the space with the hanging and positioning of artworks. Embracing this challenge, Fish was intrigued by the hearth, the area in front of the fireplace where she would designate her installation. The intervention, as she would call it, applies the same aforementioned system of color coding, based on spatial directionality, to establish formal links between the paintings, the room where they are displayed and the artist's studio/home.

In the adjacent gallery is a presentation of drawings by Richard Artschwager made in the mid 1970s. Six objects would be the source of Artschwager's multi-decade obsession: Door, Window, Table, Basket, Mirror, Rug. His compulsion to render these interior things would prompt drawings, paintings, objects and multiples, illustrating the extent of his preoccupation. Notably, his installation *Six in Four*, commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art in the Renzo Piano designed structure, would attempt to investigate the six objects in the span of four elevators. In each study, he would exaggerate perspective, surface and scale in different ways, often to comical, absurd effect. Artschwager analyses these architectural objects with the same unending devotion of Fish, albeit with his signature wry wit and surrealist humor.