

GARETH LONG ***Untitled Stories, 2011***

June 9 - July 17, 2011

TORRI is pleased to present 'Four Stories', the first solo presentation in Paris of the work of New York-based artist Gareth Long.

The exhibition features four works from Long's *Untitled (Stories)* (2008 to 2011), a series of nine lenticular prints and a collection of books that reference the work of the late American author J.D. Salinger.

In much of his previous work, Long has explored processes of translation and the cross-transference of artistic forms as a means to question authorship and the mechanisms of cultural and knowledge production. Frequently, these explorations lead to a revised understanding of Modernism as it relates to artistic and literary traditions.

In *Untitled (Stories)*, he focuses on the book cover design that was created by American publishers Little Brown & Co. for Salinger's books. This discreet design has become iconic in America and instantly brings to mind Salinger's oeuvre as a writer. Featuring a diagonal rainbow running along the corner of the book's cover, it is strongly reminiscent of the 'stripe motif' that was ubiquitous in Modernist painting at the time when Salinger was writing, particularly in the works of painters such as, such as Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and Bridget Riley.

In spite of this synonymy, Long's interest lies in a disconnection between the covers' design and Salinger's oeuvre as a writer. The motif was, in fact, first used on the cover of the books in 1991, long after they were published, and its after-the-fact lucid modernist aesthetic is incongruent with many aspects of Salinger's style as a writer. For example, Salinger's sometimes fragmented and meta-fictional narratives, and his introduction of metaphysical themes have been identified as signaling a departure from modernist literary conventions.

It is this misalignment that becomes the basis of *Untitled (Stories)*. While they retain the exact aspect ratio of the books, Long's large-scale prints amplify and distort the design, both drawing out and twisting its references to Modernism, in particular the history of abstract painting, facets of Minimalism and Op Art.

His use of lenticular technology is key. In this technique, a number of small lenses produce images with an illusion of depth, or the ability to move as the image is viewed from different angles. Long condenses more than thirty frames of video or animation into a single picture plane; as the viewer walks around the prints, the works animate, shift and slip between images.

Reminiscent of the Cracker Jack prizes that one finds in cereal packets, or kitschy posters for the latest blockbuster movie, the lenticular is not a form that invokes high cultural associations. Rather than employing it as a gimmick, however, Long harnesses its shifting optical effects to conjure the emotional turbulence of Salinger's stories and to complicating any modernist narratives.

While high Modernism called for autonomy and purity of form, Long's prints are contiguous and impure objects. They dissolve into movement as soon as we turn our heads and shift between media, suggesting, but never quite conforming to sculpture, painting and the moving image. They also recall the activity of reading. The repetitive movements one makes to activate the frames when viewing the prints are similar to leafing through the pages of a book.

Alongside the prints, the artist displays original copies of the Little Brown & Co published books. On the recto and verso, the cover of each book is erased. Only the iconic stripes remain. With this simple gesture, he underlines the slippage between the exterior's muted design and the content within.

Gareth Long was born in Toronto, Canada. He holds a BA in Visual Studies and Classical Civilizations from the University of Toronto and an MFA from Yale University. Long has held solo exhibitions at Kate Werble Gallery, New York (with reviews in the *New York Times* and *Artforum.com*); Oakville Galleries, Toronto; and Leo Kamen Gallery, Toronto. His work has been shown at the Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; the Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal; Montreal; Mercer Union Centre for Contemporary Art, Toronto; Flat Time House, London; Wiels, Brussels; Artists Space, New York; and MoMA PS1, New York. In 2011 his work will be shown in a number of exhibitions, including ones at Casey Kaplan Gallery, New York; and a solo exhibition at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery titled *Never Odd Or Even*. Long is represented by Kate Werble Gallery in New York.