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Louise Lawler, Sprüth Magers, No Drones, Gerhard Richter, Jeff Koons

Louise Lawler And The Politics Of Space

Review of Louise Lawler's No Drones at Sprüth Magers, her first solo show in the UK for four years

Lawler's photographs capture artworks in compromising positions; from a Koons Rabbit next to the refrigerator (Foreground, 1994) to Jasper Johns' White Flag in the bedroom (Monogram, 1984). This short but sweet exhibition – her first solo show in the UK for four years – is no different, displaying Lawler's continuing preoccupation with the significance of context for interpretation. The two works on display, Civilians (2010) and No Drones (2011) depict two oil paintings by Gerhard Richter; one before it is hung, coiled wires dangling, and the other viewed askance, exposing the corsetry of hooks and wires normally hidden from the gallery spectator.

The oblique photograph of Richter's Mustang-Staffel (1964) warps his rectangular depiction of a group of bomber planes into an uncomfortable trapezoid. This slant evokes similarly skewed images such as Holbein's anamorphic skull in The Ambassadors (1533), visible only when viewed from the extreme edge of the canvas, rather than the conventional, full-frontal view. We have another memento mori in the photograph of Richter's Schädel (1983), the titular skull seeming to float ominously free

of its moorings. But what does this unusual perspective reveal? Unlike her voyeuristic exposés of famous works of pop art in the context of the collector's home, we are asked to consider the nature of the gallery space itself, one so often taken for granted. The bespoke nature of the exhibition (each vinyl image stretched precisely to the dimensions of the gallery walls, and some pocket-sized fujiplex reproductions) also comments on this haute, boutique art, in playful conflict with the monolithic Richter retrospective currently at the Tate Modern.

The politics of space around paintings – normally so self-effacing as to be invisible – here becomes the star of the show. Lawler remains captivated by what lies beyond the edges of an artwork, and in these photographs focuses on the pragmatics of art; the implicit, interpretative act of framing. From this exhibition one thing remains clear: positioning is still nine-tenths of the Lawler. **Words: Isabel Seligman © 2011 ArtLyst**

[Visit Louise Lawler: No Drones @ Sprüth Magers until 23 December 2011](#)