

PRESS

yvan salomone

Exhibition open from the 31st of May to the 25th of July 2008
Opening on Saturday the 31st of May from 3 o'clock pm

For his first solo exhibition at the Gallery Xippas, Yvan Salomone will present a collection of forty watercolours that have been pinned onto the walls of the gallery.

Yvan Salomone's watercolours reflect a new, original approach to a traditional medium that is no longer often used and frequently perceived as dated. He paints highly structured scenes of ports and industrial sites on the fringe of cities, and works according to a self-imposed regime of one watercolour a week, all of which are in the same format. The name of each work highlights this rate of creation: they are composed of three numbers and one word, the first figure being the watercolour's number, and the following ones the date of its creation; the title is always composed of eleven letters.

The artist bases his work on photographs taken in situ at the port in Salomone's native town of Saint Malo, in Rotterdam, in Shanghai and elsewhere, which he later works from in his studio. Where we would expect to see frenetic movement, we are paradoxically faced with serene images completely devoid of activity or human life.

The introductory document is only informative; it is not a question of reproducing his images but of interpreting them. The choice of medium, liquid and transparent, confirms this motivation. Thus, when confronted with the weightlessness produced by the use of watercolour, the representation of the raw materials in these industrial sites (containers, concrete, steel...) undergoes a metamorphosis that lends a truly singular quality to the artist's compositions. Yvan Salomone's landscapes engender a poetic dematerialisation of reality and impose themselves on the viewer as suspended space.

At the root of each image are two adopted attitudes: that of the fastidious observer, scrutinising the objects and places that he photographs, fragments of which will assist in the composition of his own images, and also that of the "flaneur", or wonderer, roaming around and allowing himself to be drawn by certain encounters. The name of a harboured ship, for instance, a construction, or certain arrangements trigger the resurfacing of memories, which the artist later writes down. Every watercolour is the subject of a text that the artist has chosen in consideration of the works. These are projected onto the wall of the gallery's entrance.

Yvan Salomone was born in 1957 at Saint-Malo in France, where he lives and works.

Since 1989 he has worked on a series of large drawings depicting panoramic views of ports. In 1991 these drawings became the sole focus of his artistic endeavours, and ever since he has painted one a week, or 650 to date. In 1993-1994, the artist was invited by the Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam to send a watercolour a week for 36 weeks. He has since participated in numerous exhibitions in institutions and galleries: the Musée de la Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland) and the Frac Limousin in 2008; the Frac Picardie and the Gallery of Marseille in 2007; the Baronian-Francey Gallery in Brussels in 2000 and 2005; Praz Delavallade in 2000 and 2003; and the Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO) in Geneva in 2000.