

ARTnews

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How
Video
Games
Became
Art

**When Is a Warhol
a Warhol?**

**Glenn Ligon: The
Writing on the Wall**

**Hemingway & Miró:
Betting 'The Farm'**





Yves Oppenheim, *Untitled (0511K)*, 2005, acrylic on canvas, 78½" x 63".
Perry Rubenstein.

Yves Oppenheim

Perry Rubenstein

French artist Yves Oppenheim's first New York solo exhibition presented a focused decade-spanning survey. A selection of six paintings on canvas and one impressive painting on the gallery wall showed the course of his development. As the works evolved, the brushstrokes tightened, the use of an overhead projector gave way to digital sources, and oil paint yielded to acrylics. Yet Oppenheim always retained a garish sense of color and a complex approach to graphic layering in the picture.

The lush and brushy oils in *Untitled (0222H)*, 2002, animate fleshy, amorphous, and vaguely geometric shapes, capturing a loose, spontaneous approach that is also evident in *Untitled (0407J)*, 2004. However, the painting *Untitled (0511K)*, 2005, is pivotal in its sharper edges and, although it is not digitally derived, it anticipates the computer-based layering in later paintings. In this work, the flattened, wobbly shapes also recall Matisse's cutouts.

The most recent three paintings in the exhibition highlighted Oppenheim's embrace of wispy shapes drawn from

French-curve templates or quickly generated in Adobe Illustrator or similar vector-based graphics programs. The off-square format also gave way to a more elongated landscape style, sometimes compressing the image, as happens in *Untitled (1003L)*, 2010.

Despite Oppenheim's incorporation of digital technology, a seductive transparency and visible brushstrokes remain wonderfully in evidence, as in *Untitled (0902L)*, 2009, which also uses a silk screen-style application of paint. Like the numbers in titles that refer to his own sequencing system and run through this body

of work, Oppenheim's painting tends toward a kind of systemization of color and process that evokes mass production and graphic design, yet it is emphatically handmade.

—Greg Lindquist

Pentti Sammallahti

Nailya Alexander

The 51 beautiful, sometimes wry images here were carefully framed small, fleeting moments either in the human milieu—often represented by domesticated animals—or in the natural world. In

some photos the arenas interacted, as in pictures of light-colored horses set against dramatic landscapes, and a herd of sheep aglow at dusk. In others, including one showing the spots on a Dalmatian and those on a birch tree trunk, they mimicked each other. There were also images of creatures in nature.

Some of the most striking pictures seemed to suggest Nordic fairy tales. A panoramic shot from the Solovetsky Islands in Russia shows onion-domed buildings lining a snowy road, along which a dog walks with a leather bag in its mouth while a fluffy cat looks on. The urge to invent a story is almost irresistible. In another panorama from Solovki, a dog sits proudly on the seat of a ski-equipped motorcycle, its dark silhouette forming a pyramid with three dogs below.

The show also included seductive shots of animals in exotic locations. There were moody flamingos in Namibia, a dog napping on a cow in India, and a monkey riding on a goat in Nepal. There were also more familiar scenes of swans mixing with ducks in England, pigeons in Nice, France, and a puppy in a window in Greece. Particularly compelling were the statuesque cats keeping watch over strings of dried fish in Iceland.

But Sammallahti's photographs are at their best and most soulful when the subject is subtle. In a gorgeously printed panorama, also from Solovki, a dark figure walks along a snow-covered road; drifts cover buildings to the left, and houses to the right disappear into a gray, misty, sunset that suggests a colorless Turner. In the distance, at the precise center of the frame, stands a tiny black dog.

—Rebecca Robertson



Pentti Sammallahti, *Solovki, White Sea, Russia*, 1992, gelatin silver print or pigment print, 6½" x 14" or 9" x 21½".
Nailya Alexander.