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PRESS RELEASE

## ROSS HANSEN

### *Representing Abstraction*

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Populated by replica brushstrokes and simulated gestures, Ross Hansen's paintings are *about* painting. They are also about time. Extrapolated from a momentary gesture, these reproductions of marks are created via a painstaking and circuitous process of masking and re-enactment. Hansen goes the long way around, repeating and slowing down the action until the medium itself becomes the message.

Many of the current series of paintings are generated from ideas and imagery developed during a much earlier cycle of work. Others 're-make' the provisional or formative stages of *their own* production. The artist consistently trips himself up and doubles back on his own output, both recent and historic.

The sanding process employed throughout this body of work itself represents a kind of retrospection; a physical excavation of paint layers built up over time. The resulting paper-smooth surface also creates an association with the flatness of reproductions. The works have the appearance of printed copies, an effect exacerbated by the contrast between the smooth cross-sections of painted matter and the coarser texture of the linen backgrounds on which they sit.

The linen acts like a ground zero signifier of 'painting'. It effectively establishes the context for the dance between gesture and reproduction that takes place on its surface. These painted brushstrokes may be stripped of their spontaneous bravura, yet there is heroism too in these patiently constructed anti-gestures. The *hand-made* copy reinforces the value of manual facture, gaining its power and resonance from the exact same sensory appeal as the painterly mark.

Hansen's critique of painted gestures can therefore be seen as a love hate affair; the transposing of the gesture into hyper-reality a means of finding an alternate way of engaging with the same age old concerns. For Hansen it creates a kind of a-temporal space in which to reinvent the wheel.

**Ross Hansen** (b.1973, UK) studied at Newcastle University and The Slade School of Fine Art, University College London. Recent exhibitions include: *After Images*, stephane simoens contemporary fine art, Knokke, Belgium; *Se souvenir des Belles Choses*, Musée Régional d'Art Contemporain, Sérignan, France; *Contemporary Drawings from Britain*, Museum of Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, Shaan Xi Province, P R China; *Dessins au Cube*, l'École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture, Montpellier, France. His work is held in numerous public and private collections including FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon and UBS Warburg. He now lives and works in rural France.