

ARTFORUM

Lyon

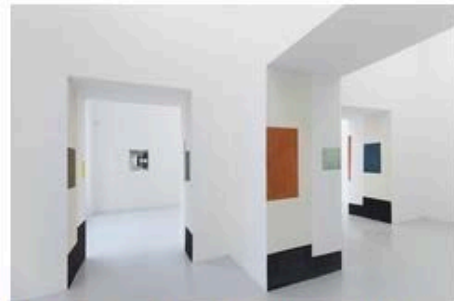
Ernst Caramelle

LA SALLE DE BAINS

27 rue Burdeau

April 18–June 7

A dichotomous tension between expressive and conceptual responses to the walls of this institution is quietly provoked in this exhibition, beginning with the transitional doorways between exhibition rooms. Onto the wide walls of these doorframes, six of Austrian artist Ernst Caramelle's signature wall paintings—or as the artist calls them, “quasi-frescoes”—have been applied and individually named *Untitled* (all works 2014). By mixing the painting pigments using minerals and water, each wall painting is formed of large, bright, if not translucent (owing to their high water content), colored rectangles. For example, the one painted onto the right-hand passageway consists of two base rectangles, one beige and one white, over which Caramelle has painted one large burnt-orange rectangle, on the left, and one small light-green rectangle, on the right, and has demarcated the bottom with two conjoined black multisize horizontal rectangles. Necessarily conceived and painted in situ, these wall paintings bear expansive brushstrokes and porous blotches from the thick house-paint brushes and sponges used in their production, clearly tracing their author's hand and identifying the paintings as unique.



View of “Ernst Caramelle: *Untitled*,” 2014.

In contradiction to this gestural approach, the second grouping of works in the exhibition is a compilation of repurposed found imagery collected by Caramelle between 1986 and 1991, including invitation cards to his past shows and clippings he has reintegrated into six untitled, unsigned, and unnumbered screen prints. Collectively titled *Anonymous Images*, each screen print is prominently installed on one of five of the main exhibition walls, and is an individual assemblage of architectural perspectives, still lifes, photographs of figures—in both living and statue forms—and of zigzagging geometric shapes that bear formal similarity to the nearby wall paintings. The images can also be found both in the artist's 2005 exhibition catalogue and throughout the retrospective artists books on the publication table in the entryway of La Salle de Bains. As a result, aggregated clippings normally assigned solely to museum reading rooms as documentation are here accorded artwork status in place of the site-specific handpainted wall paintings relegated to the transient walkways.

— Mary Rinebold