

HEIMO ZOBERNIG

SIMON LEE - LONDON

Heimo Zobernig's practice includes sculpture, painting and video, as well as the places where those practices intersect. This exhibition is exclusively of paintings produced in 2011 and 2012 that are ostensibly quotations or appropriations from the 2010 Picasso retrospective at Kunsthaus Zürich, which was itself a recreation a historic 1932 exhibition.

Seven out of eight of these paintings are painted in matte acrylic, with taped, hard-edges and squiggles of the same width. The exception is several sheets of mirror-film blue-taped onto a frame. A sort of post-painterly funhouse mirror.

While taking in the work, there is the sense of something very clever going on. Because each untitled painting is of the same dimensions and not easily differentiated, a more comprehensive reading is needed. You must take all of these works or none of them.

They are not identical, however. There are variations in the colors and mark making. In several of them, the reference to Picasso is stronger, and the tape marks function as breaks in the compositions, sometimes reminiscent of eyelashes and limbs.

In one painting with yellow, green, ultra-

marine and black and white, a figure with an elongated neck and small head is discernible that must be based on *Les Trois Danseuse* (1925). However, it is uncertain that even this direct quotation would be noticeable without guidance, as the eye has a tendency to seek out familiar forms. Another painting that is exclusively in black and white is perhaps more akin to Duchamp's *3 Standard Stoppages* (1913-14), and the orange swoops of the painting to the left of the gallerists' desk is reminiscent of a Basquiat skull.

Such visual references to artists or paintings outside the exhibition that Zobernig has chosen to focus on may be unintended, but are an interesting byproduct. It seems the death-knell that sounds for those who make paintings that delve into the "absolute limit of painting" cannot be heard if, instead of plowing forward into the breach, you turn your head sideways.

Andrea Magenheimer

HEIMO ZOBERNIG, Untitled, 2012 (detail). Acrylic on canvas, 200 x 200 cm. Courtesy the artist and Simon Lee, London

