

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

Morgan Fisher

INTERNATIONAL ART OBJECTS GALLERIES

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View of "Exterior and Interior Color Beauty," 2014.

Morgan Fisher has spent his brilliant career removing choices, framing perimeters, and constructing (not composing) works of art with an exceedingly dry sense of humor. In their simple frames and leaders, his films and paintings reveal their structures and consequently the machinations that define them. And so, in his own way, did his father—an unsuccessful maker of prefab houses who contracted color consultant Shepard Vogelgesang to select the paint colors for the off-the-shelf domiciles, creating decorative schemes in pleasing combinations.

Displayed at the gallery's counter, "Exterior and Interior Color Beauty," the 1935 pamphlet by General Houses, Inc., declares, "There are so many effects color has over and above its beauty, that expert color knowledge is required to fully utilize color harmony and contrast." Seeing these paint chips in his father's old pamphlet, Fisher immediately spotted them for what they were: readymade paintings.

White, crylight green, sky blue, red, leather brown, terra-cotta, silver gray—the names of the colors contained in a single work. At a glance, a whole era of choicelessness reveals itself, of surrendering to experts and rationalizing those things previously left to chance or expression: Choice is limited to a set of colors chosen for you. Neutral, tasteful, and anodyne, the colors have a muted, discomforting beauty in their order, elliptically addressing the hope that design can better our lives. Appearing here as enlarged paintings gridded out in vanguard planes, some kind of a wry hard-edged wit leaks through, side-mouth asides to Sol LeWitt and Blinky Palermo. Using the legacy of an eighty-year-old failed housing scheme, Fisher has constructed an art-making that he follows with rigor to its conclusion. Amid all this surrendered choice, Fisher made the beautiful choice to construct these soft-hued paintings.

— *Andrew Berardini*