

THOMAS PIHL



Untitled # 2
Acrylic paint on canvas
152 x 182 cm

ALEXANDRA · SIEBELINK
[ASAP]
ART · PROJECTS



Solo show Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo 2010

Thomas Pihl

1964, Norway

Works and lives in New York, USA

Pihl derives his colors by adding layer upon layer of paint. Mixing, blending till a dominant color appears. The different layers shimmer in a distance, shadows or memories of colors that were there before and now collectively form a new color. It shows when you look at the sides of the paintings where you still see drippings and jets of color that can be traced back to the final painting. The color of the painting draws you in, it lures you to look again and again. In Pihl's work the painting itself is the center of attraction, a window to a world that is undefined but aesthetically pleasing and that refers to hidden meanings, messages from beyond the physical reality of the painting in the museum space. The painting is an object but in itself materializes meaning, contemplation.

"I think these paintings listen as much as they speak"

I am fascinated by how contemporary culture and our lives are involved in aesthetics. We are all tuned in to absorb an extraordinary amount of visual information represented by images and all kinds of well presented commodities. To give one example: In New York there are a lot of 99-cent stores with cheap merchandise that is very creatively produced to look useful or valuable. They are fascinating to study, both for the visual information, but also for the ethical structure: Most of the commodities are "useless" and probably manufactured under circumstances not acceptable, either in relation to the workers or the environment. These products are nevertheless produced with an incredible knowledge of how aesthetic information (color/form/design) has a deep visual impact. The drive behind my artistic activity is the immense production of aesthetics western culture has developed in relation to capitalism and global expansion. Beauty and value are confused with perfection (as a representation for truth), and we are getting more and more addicted to it. I wanted to use that confusion and misunderstanding as an aspect of my



54th Venice Biennale "Personal Structures" 2012

intentions. I work the surface towards a very smooth quality, which is easy to mistake as only that. The work appears stress-free at first glance and looks as if it were manufactured. But the artistic tension is complex. Marks from the process, flaws and scratches from the handling, and subtle manipulations of the surface occur and become vital components of the visual contact – and therefore the experience. These veiled manipulations and the sensuality of the surface may stand as metaphors for discovery and detection, processes that provide important information concerning our personal and cultural structures – if activated.

Artist Statement

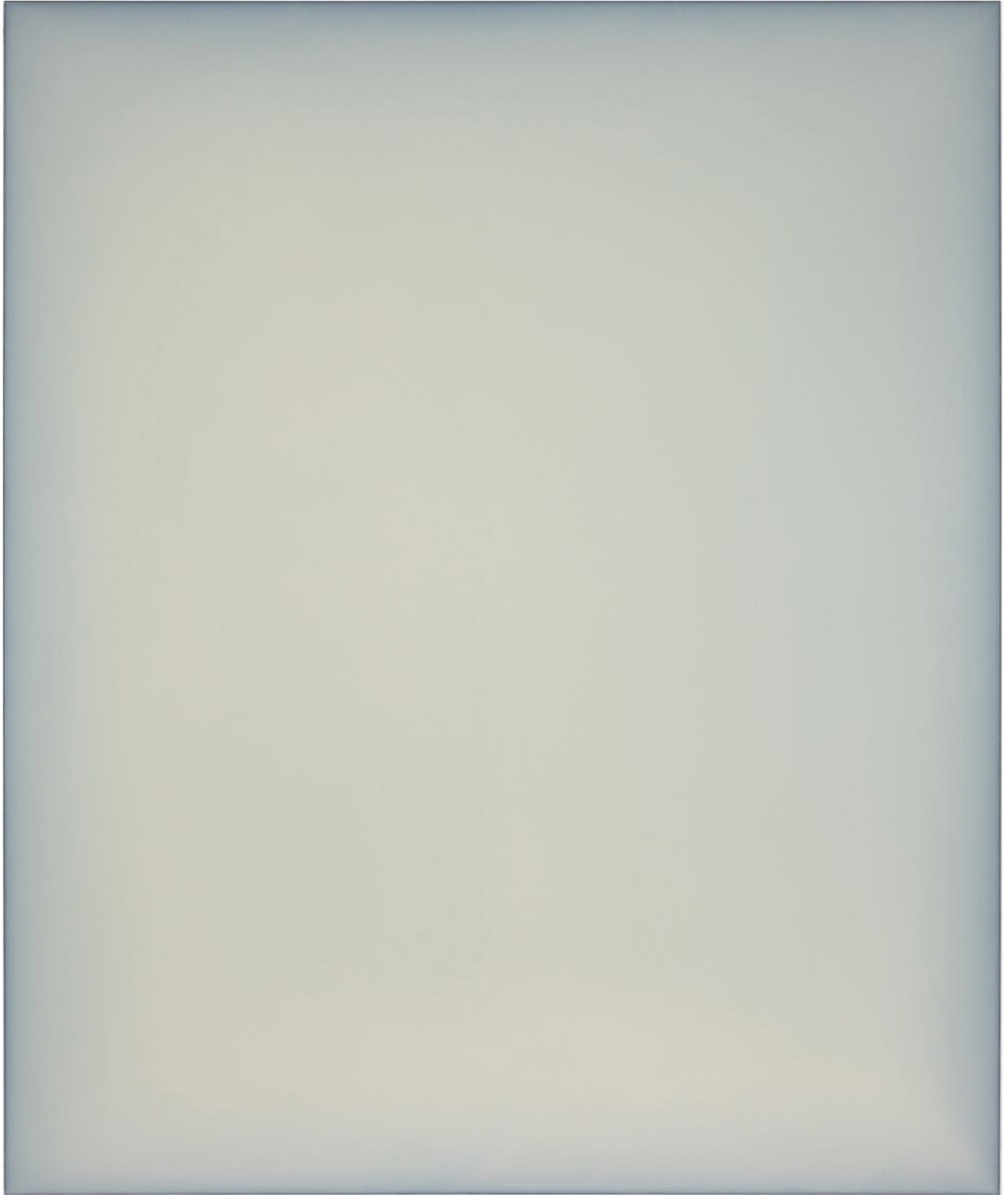
I work with color and natural light. The process to derive to a visually charged artistic result is to add layer upon layer of translucent paint. I disperse the fine pigment into a slab of acrylic medium, This not only to facilitate a vehicle for light to physically penetrate and infiltrate the surface which create a complex blend of painterly and natural light – It also creates

a soup of pigment and light so intimate, that its difficult for the eye to differentiate. The layers and layers of translucent paint are laid out with almost invisible contrasts to challenge and test the eyes capacity to differentiate subtle and barely visible phenomena. I hope to both clarify and obscure the eyes ability to pin down where the experience clearly starts, and where it ends. I reduce the visual vocabularies to a seemingly monochromatic arrangement where the color and light bounce back to the eye. The grain of pigment is suspended in a slab of clear acrylic medium. This again opens up for natural light to penetrate the surface of the painting. The light occupies the translucent space between the surface and the canvas and surrounds the pigment. This visual arrangement opens the surface of the painting to the onlooker's own vision. My intention is to facilitate a display where eyesight - pierce the surface and bleed in through the suspended fog of pigment. The veiled manipulations and the sensuality of the surface may stand as metaphors for discovery and possible detection.



ASAP Gallery PAN Amsterdam 2019





Untitled # 4
Acrylic paint on canvas
152 x 182 cm

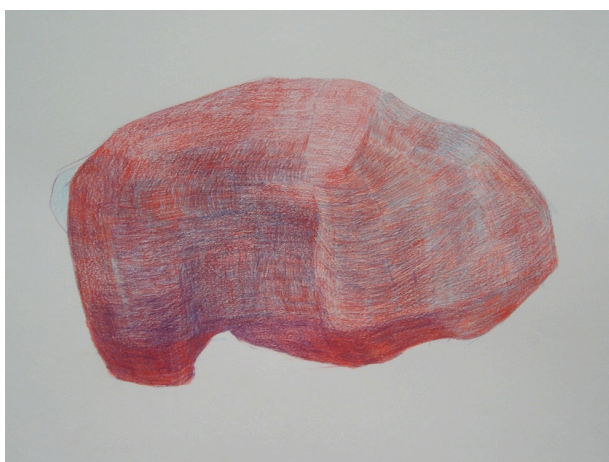
Selected collections



Untitled 2006
Oilstick on paper
56 x 76 cm



Untitled 2020
Charcoal on paper
90 x 120 cm



Untitled 2004
Colored pencil on paper
50 x 65 cm



Untitled 2006
Oilstick/pencil on colored paper
35 x 25 cm



Untitled 2006
Charcoal on paper
56 x 76 cm



Untitled 2004
Mixed media
55 x 50 x 25 cm

Selected collections

- Bergen Art Museum, Bergen, Norway
- The National Museum of Art, Oslo, Norway
- H.M. Queen Sonja of Norway
- Hunter College City University of New York

Selected exhibitions

- "Sight Specific" Solo show Museum "Kode", Bergen, Norway 2021
- "The Whole Picture" Sikkema Jenkins & Co, New York 2019
- "Light Lines" Scandinavia House, New York, 2018
- "Personal Structures" 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy 2012



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