

Montevidayo | “Ann Pibal and Rebecca Wolff: As Is/So Is” | Geoffrey Cruickshank-Hagenbuckle | April 24, 2012
(Online)



Ann Pibal’s paintings subdue ruled angle geometrics on off-color fields. Gracing aluminum panels (13×20”) they hint at signifieds. Muted El Lizzitsky, maps—but just, some say windows.

Pibal states, “It’s easier to talk about structure than color.” Yet discussion turned in part to hue, hemming her into tight corners with terms like decorative and pretty. In truth, Pibal’s palette, its choices and composition, first practice to deceive. They skirt crowd pleasers. (Will it sound like I smoke Crack if I cite Ed Ruscha?) Slyly implying Design, she evades Pantone numbers, pastels, and equivocating shades. Her lime is swamp, while plage revisits laxatives, and dawn is No Tell Motel rouge. She confuses, then eludes. I mean this in the best possible way.

Pibal presented these in Power Point at As Is/So Is, Triple Canopy’s poet and painter cage match (cozy up) with poet, novelist and Fence editor Rebecca Wolff. Moderated by Lucy Ives, its title quote from Horace refers poetry to painting. Part of a set including a recent récit at MoMA by Ariana Reines, this home base stand, staged in one agreeably useful, high-ceilinged “white box” room, was attended by fifty. Sound and vision tech operated flawlessly, effacing itself.

Triple Canopy opened in January with a weekend long marathon reading of Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*, by over 100 poets. Its project space will edit, curate, publish and present art wed to literature in person, pixels and print. "When you consider where or how writing exists today, it must dialogue with image, perhaps even in a tense, competitive way (Certainly it won't act as a polite caption!) One thing aired during Ann and Rebecca's exchange was the question of what words can do to a picture, particularly as regards a painting's title and picture plane*. Many editors at Triple Canopy are involved in expanding our notions of reading; pairings like *As Is/So Is* permit us to look again at ways a poem or painting asks to be read." (Lucy Ives)

Rebecca Wolff spoke poems echoing the visuals. She's a magus. Her poetry is honest, fierce yet elegant, keeping secret formal laws. Quality is its content. "The king is content." (From: *Content is King*) It cannot be rephrased, only reiterated. So too, her canny demurral to treat art with words suspends in "un-identifying relation." Together Pibal and Wolff proposed a "sideways glance" allied with "a generous image," not perhaps lush or evocative, but giving illicit takes, where "pleasure" and "satisfied" breathe.

We may appear near Ranciere here, but *As Is/So Is* steered clear of posturing plus all power blab: the ambiance, alert cogent extemporizing. Our players' sensibilities, humor, flavor and intelligence shone with no pretense.

After, in house Q & A addressed brushstroke and painterly gesture, their suppression, imitation, expression. Chat back continued over open dinner invites out accepted by 15. Topics ranged from dress code on Kentucky Derby Day, replete with cell phone photos of "to die for" saddle shoes, through Anthropologie to trailers for novels.

*Confessed solipsist Wolff had even liked naming her children.