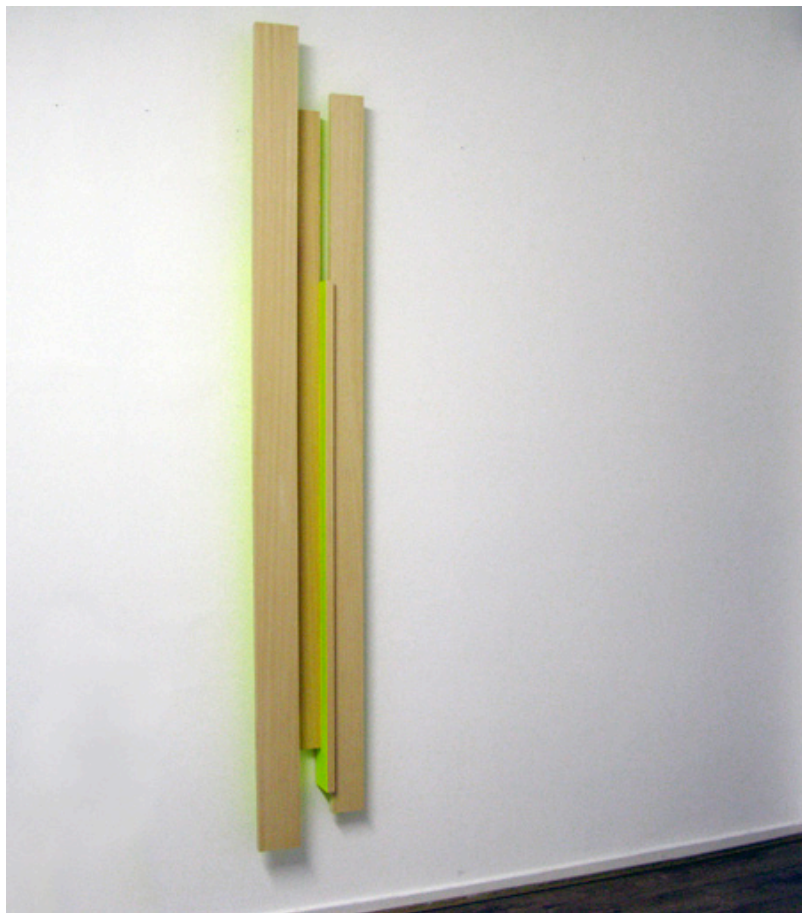


CAROLINE PAGÈS GALLERY // PRESS RELEASE



Jeanine Cohen, Vertical Yellow II, 2010, Acrylic on wood (Ayous), 190 x 27 x 9 cm

Jeanine Cohen

Keeping things pretty straight

October 1 – November 26

Opening Saturday, October 1, from 5 to 8 pm

Caroline Pagès Gallery

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Opening Hours: From 3 - 8 pm every day except Sundays, and by appointment.

Kublai: - I do not know when you had time to visit all the countries that you describe to me. I think you have never set foot outside this garden.

Polo: - Each thing that I see and do makes sense within a space of the mind, where the same calm that exists here, the same shadow, the same silence covered by the crackle of leaves reigns.

Knowing the photos where Jeanine Cohen has framed windows, railings, shutters, vitrines, nets, divisions, fences, prefabs, steps, etc. is unnecessary for us to identify these elements and (re)discover them on the planes, lines, grids, traces, shadows, textures, transparencies, visibilities, opacities, etc., found in her visual search. If we look at her photos (the option was not to display them in the gallery but rather on her website or

in artist's books, and quite rightly so), we recognise everyday architecture distinguished by the moving perspective in the towns that Jeanine visited, like Tel Aviv or Lisbon, on journeys in the U.S.A. or during periods of residence in Iceland.

It is rare for a building photographed by Jeanine Cohen, in the street of some town, not to be framed by a corner, squinting, from the perspective that encourages movement, and, as a result of this action, one which promotes the visibility of multiple levels. Dare I say that this positioning of perspective is not a strategy to achieve, in this example, the dimensions of an apartment block. I will begin by describing my (apparent) contradiction.

The perspective seeks to describe the anatomy of a city at the end of the day (there are no people on Jeanine's streets), the view seeks to maintain the precision of the precarious nature, or the ruin, of anonymous architecture. And yet, I believe that this collected documentation (objects, materials, bodies that fill our cities) is the "reason" for the creation of sculptures (even if these are to be placed on the wall), but the artist considers herself a painter.

And, in reality, she deals primarily with the two-dimensional aspect of painting: surface, line and colour; a merely apparent contradiction (hers). In parts. The work *surface*: the canvas of the paintings-that-are-not-sculptures is the wall of a house, of a gallery - and what better essence, or symbol, of volume and dimension than a house? Orientation: the *lines* are substantiated in wooden rulers, polished and painted on just one side, which are often movable along the frame, reminiscent of windows.

The colours are *doubly* reflected: almost never directly perceived. If the surface here is the wall, the line is a strip of wood; the colour is what is not palpable. In some ways it is the colours that refer to the aspect of painting or, in other words, that which remind us of the encounter between the experience of reality and the aesthetic, e.g. the chromatic variations of the sky reflected in the ripple-effect of a corrugated iron roof. It is this *lightness* combined with *accuracy* that suggests the idea of architecture in the work of Jeanine Cohen.

The pieces on show here focus particularly on the vertical. This change of axes can be understood as a breach on the horizon. Everything concentrated on one edge, on that corner that invites movement and the discovery of multiple planes. The same occurs in the drawing (playing with the notion of scale), the cutting, folding and consequent production of shade mark an urban mesh where a traveller discovers details of an involuntary architecture which is already a drawing.

I have chosen to begin and end this brief text with excerpts from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*; those landscapes (which are renewed with each reading) described to Kublai Kan by Marco Polo. The truth of their existence is not an issue in fiction, in the same way that it is not important which city each of Jeanine Cohen's works belongs to, because the movement of each one in relation to each drawing, painting or photograph retraces its geography, making new cities visible with every view.

So - according to some - the hypothesis that each man has a city in mind made up only of differences is confirmed; a city without figures and without form, and one that is filled with particular cities.

Maria do Mar Fazenda, August 2011

Jeanine Cohen (b. 1951) lives in Brussels. *Keeping things pretty straight* is Cohen's second solo show at the Caroline Pagès Gallery. In Portugal, the artist recently had a solo show at the Presença Gallery in Oporto (with Javier Fernandez). In 2012, she will conceive a site-specific piece at the Carpe Diem art centre in Lisbon.

The great majority of Cohen's work consists of site-specific wall paintings for public, corporate and private institutions and collections. In 2008, she was commissioned to create the 900 m² façade of a new extension to the Museum of Photography in Charleroi (Belgium).

In Belgium, the artist has exhibited at the Palais des Beaux-Arts (BOZAR), the Nicolas de Staël Art Centre, the Tapestry Museum, the Centre for Contemporary Non-Objective Art, the Centre de Couleur Contemporaine CO21, and the following galleries in Brussels: Nomad, Archetype, Etienne Tilman, In Situ, 175, and X+.

In Iceland (Reykjavik), Cohen is represented by the i8 Gallery which regularly exhibits her work; in 2004, the SAFN Museum (Reykjavik) included her in an exhibition of their collection.

In 2011, Cohen took part in the contemporary sculpture festival *Escaut. Rives, Dérives* at the Cambrai Fine Arts Museum in France.

Jeanine Cohen's work is part of public and corporate collections in Belgium (French Community in Belgium, Winterthur, Zurich, Agoria Group, Quai 55), Sweden (Statens Konstråd), Iceland (SAFN Museum), and numerous private collections in Belgium, Iceland, Israel, England, the USA, Portugal, and France.

For more information and visuals please contact the gallery.

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