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Thomas Raat
Granola
25 February - 1 April 2017

Juliette Jongma presents the second solo exhibition by Thomas Raat titled *Granola*. By referring to the material granol, the plasterwork popular in the seventies and making a comeback in current interior design, the artist Raat captures both a sense of past time and place as well as visual quotations to design, sculpture and architecture of a commonplace cityscape. Starting point for *Granola* was not just the grainy structure and a fashionable connotation of the breakfast cereal, but mainly the idea of creating an environment of the common urban space and direct surroundings incorporating elements of ordinary streets, such as house numbers, a manhole cover, and other industrially shaped elements. Objects not necessarily notable as aesthetic forms, everyday objects which are just there. Yet with his craftsmanship, the rich choice for specific materials, forms and colours, and foremost his precision and attention for detail in its finish, Raat artistically reflects upon these ordinary objects which now become objects of contemplation in the gallery space.

Granola features both sculptures and two-dimensional works. Centrally placed is a white granol cube displaying a brownish heavy-looking manhole cover, consisting of two bronze coated wooden parts that perfectly interlock. Facing the sculpture, bronze coated shapes of numbers on the wall seem greenish weatherworn by oxidation. Furthermore, a small wooden beam reminds one of metal structural beams representative of construction sites. The front space of the gallery features larger beams in minimalist shape and colour with which Raat reflects both directly upon industrialisation and modernity as well as metaphorically upon the concept of development, growth, construction and structures of urbanism. Raat flirts with ordinary architectural elements, transforming them into carefully crafted sculptural objects. The large beams are almost treated as spatial paintings in which the grain of the wood surfaces the paint, explicitly showing they are made by hand instead of machine.

Two installations each consisting of four small paintings show elegantly coloured black and dark green shapes of triangles and semicircles on a light green background, shapes inspired by the geometric modernist forms of Bauhaus. As Raat did in his earlier paintings, he accurately gouges the outlines of the shapes into the wooden panel creating depth in the surface. Each painting shows the same clean outlines and simplistic forms though combined differently as variations of the same model. The same idea underlies the larger paintings in the exhibition for which Raat works with variations of a fixed structure. The brass construction connecting the various blocks is identical in all these works and functions as a direct visual quotation to the work by Venetian architect Carlos Scarpa. Scarpa's refined use of materials and shapes recurs in Raat's so-called skin-paintings, in which he combines various materials, textures and colours such as vinyl, granol, cotton, linnen, painted glass and oiled wood. Materials associated with the bare basic elements of painting, design and architecture. The overall structure of the paintings both recall compositions reminiscent of Mondrian as well as patterns of city plans.

[Text by Niki van Gernerden]

Thomas Raat, born in 1979 in Leiderdorp, NL, graduated from the Koninklijke Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten in Den Haag, NL and Norwich School of Art and Design, UK (2006) before he was a resident at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (2011-2012). He furthermore did residencies at Deflina Studio Programm, London (2005-2006), SPACE Studios, London (2008) and Musée de l'Art de la Vie Active, Cotonou, BJ (2013). In 2010 he was awarded the Hermine van Bers Beeldende Kunstprijs and in 2003 and 2004 he won the Koninklijke Prijs voor Vrije Schilderkunst. Recent solo exhibitions include Standards at Onomatopee, Eindhoven, NL (2016), Archetypes and Residues at Schunk*, Heerlen, NL (2015), Sanseveria at Galerie Juliette Jongma, Amsterdam (2014) and Self and Others at P/////AKT, Amsterdam (2013). Raat participated in several group exhibitions including: Neotrism, NEST, Den Haag, NL (2015), Sieg über die Sonne, Galerie Rupert Pfab, Düsseldorf, DE (2014), BolteLang, Zürich (2013) and Reconnaissance - Dutch Collector's Eye & Some of the Places They Look, Testbed, London (2013).