

## II STILE

**Riccardo Previdi**

**Paolo Chiasera's** II STILE is a painting that is at the same time an exhibition space. As such it represents something that is both real and utopian. A painting is an imaginary space defined by an artist, but it also exists as an object in the world. By letting the imaginary space of the painting become a real exhibition space for other paintings - objects that themselves define imaginary spaces - II STILE add yet another layer to an ontological ambivalence, as if it would seek to expand the imaginary scope of painting itself.

Since II STILE is canvas based, it needs to be shown in a space like any other painting. The third installment of II STILE is shown in public space, on the street, applied on a billboard.

As an alternative to the exhibition space, the street itself represents something utopian; a place of direct interaction with a broad public, free from the restrictions and limitations of the art institution and the white cube. Instead of bringing the paintings of the streets into the exhibition space on a canvas, II STILE brings the exhibition space on a canvas out on the street. It utilizes an existing display structure (the billboard) to squat a public space with an imaginary private apartment in which an exhibition by Riccardo Previdi is shown. I find it a refreshing take on the relation between painting and public space.

**Riccardo Previdi's** new work TATAMI consists of a video projection on two paintings on billboard pieces. The video shows robots performing different tasks while the paintings depict bot detection texts – so-called CAPTCHA's.

A CAPTCHA is a series of letters and/or numbers that are stretched, blurred or crossed out; a stylized version of a random word that is readable only by humans. A letter or a number is, much like the space defined in a painting, an abstraction. At the same time it has a physical form, the written letter, that carry traces of individual expression. The CAPTCHA is a generic stylization that is incomprehensible to a robot, much like a complex wildstyle letter is unreadable to a non-graffiti writer. In TATAMI, The CAPTCHA is not automatically generated, but instead hand painted.

I look at the paintings and confirm my humanity by passing the bot detection test. I can read the text while the video is disturbed by the paintings it is projected onto. I see both at the same time. I can't help to think that the CAPTCHA is beyond comprehension of the robot shown in the video.

Some people write their names in public space to leave their traces and thus to confirm that they exist. Their handwriting is a record of their humanity. That is why I love tags. Previdi leaves a trace of his humanity as a contrast to the industrial mass produced advertisement prints it is painted on.

TATAMI depicts a world in which humans and robots move through the same spaces, interact with each other and try to decode the same informations. In this world, painting becomes an opportunity to escape the generic and easily decodable images of the internet and the advertisements in public space. A subtle devotion to human expression.

I like the idea of projecting a video on a painting on a billboard on a painting on a billboard in public space. It reminds me that the frame is always a part of the work and that I can define that frame myself. It lights my imagination and leaves me curious what comes next.

*Christian Falsnaes*