

press announcement

## **Russell Maltz, *Becoming Painted/Stacked***

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When someone is being „tarred and feathered“ the consequences are drastic in a literal sense. But when Russell Maltz „paints and stacks“ wood planks, bricks or paper, this is much less drastic, but no less consequent. Since the 1970s the New York based artist has followed his unique artistic strategy with a consistency, which one may easily attribute an astonishing power and diversity. Mostly it is a sign of a convincing inner stance.

Michael Sturm gallery has been representing Russell Maltz for 20 years. The show „Becoming Painted/Stacked“, which is inaugurated on the 24th of May, is quite a jubilee exhibition in a double sense: It is reminiscent of the founding years of the gallery and at the same time it celebrates the initial moment in Russell Maltz's artistic approach, which the artist has been practicing for 40 years. The exhibition is comprised of drawings, paintings, wall and floor pieces. Self-evidently these are paintings we are dealing with. But the base for the painting and the stacking is at times not easily enunciated.

The roots of Russell Maltz's ever evolving oeuvre lie in the American tendency of colour field painting. Unlike Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman and Clifford Still Russell Maltz is not interested in some kind of apotheoses or the sublime. Quite the opposite is the case, as he takes painting back to it's basis so to speak, without disregarding it's value: „I have always thought about painting as color moving across an area – a surface / the instance – the moment of coverage – the motion / in that succinctness – that moment of arrival – the painting happens.“

„The painting happens“: from this, results an understanding of painting for Russell Maltz which keeps the aspects of movement and transition, of the spontaneous and the instantaneous in mind. His paintings and stackings are settlements, the reception of whose is rather situation based than contemplative. His works aren't hermetic, but open in the best of senses – as if one were confronted with a condition that might change at any time.

It is mostly the groundbreaking openness of this artistic stance which led Russell Maltz to create art in spaces, where one would least expect it – in garages, hardware stores or in nature such as the Austrian alps. And it is that same openness, which lets him paint and stack all possible and impossible materials – plastic tubes from México, firewood from Switzerland or metal profiles in a museum in Ohio.

And now until the end of July at Michael Sturm gallery: **Russell Maltz – Becoming Painted/Stacked**, situational and with captivating consequence. Additional works are now on view in a survey exhibition at the **Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken**. The works on view cover the works from 1987 to the present where Russell Maltz has installed a newly commissioned piece in the outdoor space of the courtyard of the Stadtgalerie.

The opening of the exhibition takes place on Wednesday the 24th of May from 7-9 pm. The artist is present.

For more information visit [www.galerie-sturm.de](http://www.galerie-sturm.de) and <http://www.stadtgalerie.de>.