



CRITICS' PICKS

CURRENT PAST

New York

- Francis Cape
- Alex Katz
- Unica Zürn
- Wolfgang Staehle
- Andrew Bush
- Sophie Calle

Los Angeles

- Jim Isermann
- Henry Taylor

San Francisco

- Desirée Holman

Berkeley

- Mario García Torres

Boston

- Shepard Fairey

Dallas

- Richard Patterson

Houston

- "Human Nature"

New Orleans

- Kara Hearn

Providence

- Marcel Breuer

Berlin

EVOL
WILDE GALLERY
Chausseestr. 7
May 1–May 30

EVOL creates drab city scenes with humble materials, yet his spray-paint-on-cardboard paintings are breathtaking. Born in a town in southwestern Germany, he began stenciling precisely rendered images of tired, featureless prefab housing blocks onto outdoor electric boxes when he moved to Berlin. In his first solo show at the Wilde Galley, he presents ten predominantly black, white, and gray images spray-painted on discarded packing materials, and a single walk-in installation of a block of lifeless midrise apartments at night.

As a street artist with training in product design, he often incorporates the kind of black humor and politics associated with Blek Le Rat, Shepard Fairey, and Banksy into his imagery. However, his understated paintings made this year are distinctive and engaging primarily because they are stripped of the irony, agitprop, and other attention-grabbing tactics that art's survival on the street requires. Instead, the only nods to graffiti culture in EVOL's recent paintings are the sections where he integrates the original marker writing that remains on the boxes or where packaging marks appear as unimaginative tags spray-painted on walls.

The streets that the artist represents are not bustling thoroughfares bursting with frenetic human energy and activity. Rather, they are mostly devoid of any human presence. Bicycles, cars, recycling bins—as well as shadowy silhouettes, just barely discernible behind windowpanes—suggest that the streets are populated, and the paintings' interplay between light and dark evokes a midday hour when people are awake and somewhere else. The overall Hopper-esque vision of life that he depicts is calm, quiet, and mundane. Yet by rendering tiny, individualizing details, such as flower boxes installed to brighten homes, Evol succeeds in bringing the unglamorous human reality of his streets into the gallery.



EVOL, *Wallflower, Multiple Choice*, 2009, spray paint on cardboard, 21 x 27".

— Ana Finel Honigman