



## mathieu mercier

Spencer Brownstone Gallery  
New York

Recent discussions around the intersection of art and architecture focus on a fusion in fields, but Mathieu Mercier approaches this matter in terms of confusion, or rather, camouflage. His work sits somewhere between polished finished product and plumbing. Mercier is invested in the negotiation of construction, decoration, abstraction and obstruction, what curator Eungie Joo has termed "abstruction." For his solo debut in New York, the artist begins his spatial excavation with a question posed in a drawing—"which science could help me understand this space?" Mercier's crafty brand of modernist nostalgia turns that movement's legacy on its head, towards a kind of critical-decorative. *AAA*, a sculpted neon light box, morphs fonts from disparate eras, inventing conflated graphics drained of meaning. In *Drum and Bass 2*, white pedestals set off black and silver plexiglas sculptures mimicking the form and dimensions of a record, laser disc, 45", CD, and mini disk, as abstract relics signaling a techno-cultural chronology. His notorious *Plastic Anchors Wall* (1993-2002), a non-painting or monumental wall drawing, is fashioned from a one-inch-

square stencil pattern, reiterated in an all-over fashion, articulated by primary-colored plastic anchors sited in the gallery wall. As such, the apparatus for hanging art becomes the work. This highly formal constellation of the most trivial of objects speaks to Mercier's larger tendency to aestheticize the ordinary. In *Hi/Lol/No-tech*, a generic, modular industrial shelving unit in black metal substitutes for a canonical minimalist stack. Mercier's intervention also includes three red notebooks, a yellow utility lamp and cord, and blue plastic organizational bins. This is Mondrian's grid and palette gone "back to school." *Euro Palette* (2000), a rectangular white particleboard sculpture leaning up against the wall, employs the material of disposable, often toxic, temporary college furniture. The piece reverberates with the form of the standard suburban white picket fence and the artist's perverse pleasure and disdain for all that it signifies. In lending an aesthetic sensibility to the vernacular, the artist reassesses both use and value.

Lauri Firstenberg

| Mathieu Mercier installation view, 2002.

