

Parker's Box 193 Grand Street Brooklyn NY 11211

We are very pleased to announce the opening of:

Novalis XJS new paintings by Stefan Sehler

Opening Reception, Friday September 21, 6-9 pm

Exhibition dates: September 22 – November 4, 2001

Opening Hours, Friday to Sunday 1 to 7 pm

A Special Message

Preparing a press release for circulation after the events of September 11 is a strange task. My own involvement with World Trade Center artists' residency programs meant that I spent considerable amounts of time in what were the highest studios in the city. It is hard to come to terms with the fact that those studios no longer exist, and will no longer be bathed in the wonderful sunlight of a New York morning. Far more difficult to accept is the horrendous loss of life in this tragedy, and, indeed, one artist from the studios is among the missing. In the light of all this, how can we justify the idea of inviting people to look at paintings? It's true that art is unlikely to directly help us understand the urgent question of why such acts of terror have been directed against the US. Nevertheless, art making certainly exists as the opposite of the destructive forces we recently witnessed. As such, it seems to me to be of great importance to protect and support the making of new works of art in our society, even if the effects and "usefulness" of them are cumulative and long term. In the short term perhaps art can restore some kind of faith in humanity, by introducing new ideas, e

Alun Williams, Director

The Berlin-based painter, Stefan Sehler, has developed the ability to position himself, in an intriguingly precise juggling act, on the razor's edge between opposing and complementary territories of painting. The orchestration in his work of an evolving dynamic between representation and abstraction has helped to create a respected position for him in Europe, in relation to both the legacy of German painting, and the potential of its future. In the surprising new "flower" paintings that Sehler has made for Parker's Box, he has worked on the back of Plexiglas panels, often with metallic paint, which may seem to link his thinking to Gerhard Richter's mirror paintings, as indeed might his strong relationship to both figurative and abstract devices. However, if Sehler has been fully conscious of the achievements of painters of the older generation in Germany, whenever his work has been shown alongside that of Richter or Polke, for example, it has been on his own artistic terms. In this respect, Sehler is a pioneer, not a follower, and the risks he has taken in developing new techniques and ideas for the current exhibition clearly bear witness to this spirit.

The exhibition title: *Novalis XJS*, takes its references from two very different worlds. First, *Novalis* was the pseudonym of Friedrich von Hardenberg, an eighteenth century Romantic poet. One of the most celebrated subjects of his writings is the sublime metaphoric beauty and spirituality he ascribes to a blue flower. *XJS*, on the other hand, refers to the almost kitsch purity of the 1970's British XJS Jaguar automobile. Navigating finely between similarly diverse inputs, Sehler's paintings lure the spectator with the promise of such bastions of painting history as spiritual fulfillment, and sublime beauty. Whether they achieve this or not, they follow through by slapping us out of our blissful trance with injections of irony, ambiguity, even goofiness. Here, we recognize that the classicism of these paintings is also an illusion, (and all painting is illusion), calculated to shelter an anarchic application of paint in which the paint is simply allowed to joyfully speak for itself. In these passages, the abstract and the representational become the same thing, and the paint itself, (along with its context), is doing everything.

For further information please don't hesitate to contact the gallery at 718 388 2882 / parkersbox@hotmail.com