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**JESSE WILLENBRING**  
***Left to the Darkness***

May 6-June 12, 2011

Opening reception Sunday, May 8, 6-8 pm, in conjunction with New York Gallery Week

Laurel Gitlen is pleased to present *Left to the Darkness*, a solo exhibition of new work by Jesse Willenbring.

By turns blithe, organic, and critical, there is a buoyant tension between sincerity and irony, gravity and levity, at the center of the Jesse Willenbring's paintings. Both painterly and graphic, the works push for multiple possibilities for painting, pointing obliquely toward historical precedents, teetering close to the point of formal deterioration, and flirting with both the revelations and absurdities of abstraction.

The works in the exhibition – large canvases and smaller framed paintings on panel – employ traditional subject matter: windows, still-lives, landscapes, interiors, and a fishbowl. Through diagrammatic articulations of space, the compositions are rotated, shifted and applied on top one another. Utilizing common and iconic tropes of Modernist painting, Willenbring reworks and instantiates these gestures into layers of graphic shorthand, as loose gestures and glyptic signs repeat and are stacked together. These signs feel familiar, but the references are unrecognizable as specific citations. Instead, these marks feel to be at the periphery of all painting, or, perhaps this is simply what we understand as the hand of the painter, and it is this unfashionable romanticism and attention to the craft and action of painting that makes Willenbring's paintings admirably difficult to categorize or contain.

Jesse Willenbring received an MFA from Hunter College in 2010 and has been included in group exhibitions at Gavin Brown's enterprise, Lehmann Maupin, and Rivington Arms. Willenbring was the co-curator of *Don't Perish* at Leo Koenig Projekte, *Rose Colored Glasses* at GBE @ Passerby, and is the co-editor (with Carter Mull and Aram Moshayedi) of *P & Co.*, a biannual newspaper. This is his second solo exhibition at the gallery.

The gallery is open Wednesday-Sunday from 11-6 and by appointment. Please contact the gallery for more information or images.