

Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release

Kohei Akiba – Jonathan Delachaux – Jennifer Packer Schandra Singh – Zheng Wei

Paint as Figure

February 28 – April 6, 2013

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 28, 6-8:30 pm

Thomas Erben is excited to present an exhibition featuring the work of five young painters. The human form is intensely present throughout the show, with bodies sometimes breaking apart into abstract materiality, yet holding together as each artist balances urgency with precision. While based in different countries – China, Japan, Switzerland and the USA – these painters connect in their exploration of the medium's relation to subject matter.



Kohei Akiba's paintings are intense and bold, with thickly applied paint creating a physical presence extending from the painted surface. Working in oil on canvas, he often focuses on the human face, either in pale and chalky black and white, or in jarring color. The figurative is pushed to the edge of abstraction, and though the colors may be far from natural, there is a markedly carnal quality to these paintings. In comparison, Akiba's works on paper might seem toned down at first glance, but they pulsate with the same fierce energy of inner life being thrust to the surface. In his deeply personal work, the artist lets the abject intermingle with the sincere.

Kohei Akiba (b. 1982, Tokyo) graduated from the **Tokyo University of Arts** in 2009. His work has been exhibited at **AMP Gallery** (2010), **Turner Gallery** (2011), and **Nanzuka** (2012), all in Tokyo. In 2011, he was one of the recipients of the **SICF11 Prize**. Akiba lives and works in Tokyo.



In 1994, **Jonathan Delachaux** created three imaginary characters – Vassili, Johan and Naima – life-size puppets whose daily life and experiences ever since have formed the subject matter of his paintings. Beginning in an impulse to document the passing of time within his art, Delachaux has interacted with these characters, letting them age as he ages, mixing their lives with those of his friends and himself. Each work takes on the

energy from a performance with his subjects, which he photographs, then paints with colors separated in reverse, on plastic foil. Once the result is transferred onto canvas, the lives of Vassili, Johan and Naima exist in the intersection between performance, photography and painting.

Jonathan Delachaux (b. 1976, Môtiers, Switzerland) graduated from the **Ecole Superieure d'Arts Visuels**, Geneva, in 1998. He had numerous solo shows, at venues such as **Galerie Une**, Neuchâtel, Switzerland (2002, with Zoé Cappon); **Haas & Fischer**, Zürich (2006 and 2009); **Schweizerische Botschaft**, Berlin (2006); **New Galerie de France**, and **FIAC** (both Paris, 2008); **Foxy Production**, New York (2009, with Lizzie Fitch); **Galerie Daniel Varenne**, Geneva (2011); and **J & P Fine Art**, Zurich (2012). In 2007, Delachaux's work was on view in the project space of Thomas Erben Gallery. He lives and works in Geneva.

Thomas Erben Gallery
526 West 26th Street, 4th floor
New York, NY 10001
212-645-8701
info@thomaserben.com
www.thomaserben.com



There is a tension in the paintings of **Jennifer Packer**, between the people and objects represented, and the viewer. Subjects defy the privileged gaze of their audience, lounging languidly with a complete lack of interest in being watched or observed. In Packer's own words, "In a painting like *Ottoman (Cushion)*, even the objects can feel exhausted of their purpose." This need to challenge conventions of what painting does and how it relates to its subjects is supplanted, however, by her obvious fascination with the medium, and her resulting skill as a painter. Balancing between the figurative and the fractured, Packer lets shapes blend and flow into each other, with edges simultaneously precise and dissolving. Every surface is articulated with a combination of harshness and beauty, where light and emptiness play as important a role as the paint itself.

Jennifer Packer (b. 1984, Philadelphia, PA) completed her BFA at the **Tyler School of Art** in 2007, and her MFA at **Yale** in 2012. Her work has been exhibited at **Woodmere Art Museum**, Philadelphia (2009), **Fredericks and Freiser**, New York, (2012); and is currently included in *FORE*, at **The Studio Museum in Harlem**, where she is also an Artist-in-Residence.



Schandra Singh's large-scale oil paintings executed on linen depict locals and vacationers at far-flung, exotic locales. Built of faceted shapes as if their muscles and fascia were exposed, the figures are confrontational and aggressive. Bordering on the grotesque, and profusely detailed, Singh's subjects are both victims and perpetrators of a visual culture gone mad. Merging morbidity with beauty, her work interrogates the psychological and political implications of leisure in an era of global crisis.

Schandra Singh (b. 1977, Suffern, NY) completed her BFA (1999) at the **Rhode Island School of Design** and went on to receive her MFA in painting (2006) at **Yale**. She had solo exhibitions at **Nature Morte**, Berlin (2011), **Bose Pacia**, New York (2010), **Galerie Bertrand & Gruner**, Geneva, (2008) and has shown internationally, most notably in *The Empire Strikes Back*, **Saatchi Gallery**, London (2010). Singh's work was included in *New Selections: South Asia*, at Thomas Erben in 2012. The artist lives and works in Poughkeepsie, NY.



The distinct and rough materiality in the work of **Zheng Wei** stems from his background as a printmaker. Each painting is based in the solidity of wood carving, but then veers off - into a colorful excess of paint; an assemblage of jagged metal objects; a violent collage of broken bones and blood. Accessories of rock and punk culture - such as chains and razors - are common elements, and this esthetic permeates the work. Wei mixes his materials liberally, studding carved boards with nuts and bolts, collaging hair, paper and string with cassette tapes, scissors, shoes. As technical skill is channeled through youthful recklessness, Wei's work reverberates in a place between craft and manufactured rebellion.

Zheng Wei (b. 1983, Harbin, China) graduated from the Department of Printmaking at **China Central Academy of Fine Arts** in 2008. He had solo exhibitions with **Beijing Art Now Gallery** (2010 and 2012) and **J Chen Gallery**, Taipei (2011), and has participated in multiple group exhibitions in China, Taiwan and Korea.

Gallery hours: Tue - Sat, 10 am-6 pm.

For further information and visuals, please visit www.thomaserben.com or contact the gallery at 212-645.8701.

Thomas Erben Gallery
526 West 26th Street, 4th floor
New York, NY 10001
212-645-8701
info@thomaserben.com
www.thomaserben.com