

Press release

February 2014

Joe Bradley, The SS Potlicker and Friends

March 21 to May 31, 2014

Opening on Thursday, March 20, 6 – 8 pm

Maag Areal, Zahnradstr. 21, 8005 Zurich

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is delighted to announce its second solo show of American artist Joe Bradley entitled „The SS Potlicker and Friends“.

Bradley’ s work has never ceased to evolve since the beginning of his career, always pushing the boundaries of a new abstraction within his pictorial practice.

Drawing from archetypal forms, the artist constructed different series of works, amongst them the Schmagoo Paintings, for which he used a grease pencil and elaborated on very simple motifs such as a stick figure, logos or a fish. These works relate to his practice as a draughtsman, not thought of as sketches but rather as a freer mode of expression where singular motifs are given space without having to relate to one another. Bradley also explored the idea of a series referred to modular paintings, constructed from different shaped monochrome canvases, creating figure-like silhouettes. In his last show at the gallery, the artist, as if going against these clean and intelligible shapes and motifs, displayed a series of abstract paintings, combining large canvases, sewn together, painted on all sides, with multifarious layers of paint, materials and meaning. They recall not only a tradition of American Abstract Expressionist painters such as Jackson Pollock or Willem de Kooning, but draw to deeper roots of art history by invoking cave paintings and primitive art. These intricate paintings, which at first glance seem totally abstract, reveal that the artist never abandons the figure, which is always in some way present in the painting. Furthermore, all his works have a comprehensive title, as if he wanted to stir the viewer in a certain direction, perhaps one that refers more to figuration and its origins, than the most straightforward aperçu of abstraction.

Bradley envisages this tradition of painting and of art in its more general definition as a shared space, a space within which every artist who has painted and who is painting is present. This forces the viewer to understand his practice not necessarily as a movement forward but as a conversation, a conversation with a heritage as well as with his own work, and thus comprehend that Bradley might return to earlier series or motifs.

As mentioned by the artist to MoMA curator Laura Hoptman in a recent interview, all the different series are all part of the same aesthetic. Using the metaphor of skin, he concedes that the work shares the same DNA but is visually different. For this new exhibition,

Bradley will present a new series of paintings he describes as “modular paintings” or “figures” , which revisits the strategies employed in the earlier works. Each painting is comprised of multiple panels, made of stretched canvases some of them creating figure-like shapes whilst some others embody forms of abstract totems. On a large scale and with different panels connected to one another, the artist manages to expand once again on an already rich oeuvre and vocabulary. All the canvases are painted rather unceremoniously and the recent expressionism of other canvases is absent, these new works are meant to be read rather as painting.

Joe Bradley will have a solo show at Le Consortium in Dijon, France opening in June 2014.

For further information please contact Maria Florut (m.florut@presenhuber.com) at the gallery.

Parallel shows: Andrew Lord, on Carson mesa
February 15 to May 10, 2014
Löwenbräu Areal, 2nd floor, Limmatstrasse 270

Brillembourg & Klumpner, Empower Shack
February 15 to May 10, 2014
Löwenbräu Areal, 1st floor, Limmatstrasse 270

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday, 10 am – 6 pm
Saturday, 11 am – 5 pm
Or by appointment