

VAN DOREN WAXTER

Go Figure

January 11 - February 18, 2017

Van Doren Waxter is pleased to present *Go Figure*, a group exhibition that explores the intersection of select historical and contemporary artists through the vernacular of figurative painting. Spanning a period of over 70 years (1944-2016), this cross-generational survey considers the timeless tradition of figuration as a through line connecting past to present. The included artists employ varying media and pictorial strategies to produce imagistic effects often blurring the lines of representation to create dramatic scenes of unreality. *Go Figure* will include painting, sculpture, works on paper and assemblage from James Brooks, Joseph Cornell, Richard Diebenkorn, Philip Guston, Ed Paschke, Hedda Sterne as well as contemporary artists Kristin Baker, Michael Berryhill, Jeronimo Elespe, Volker Huller, and Sarah Peters.

Philip Guston (Canadian, 1913-1980) one of the most heralded first generation Abstract Expressionists initially experimented with pure abstraction. By 1960, however, Guston dove headlong into figurative forms. Guston's provocative figuration, famously exhibited in 1970, was resisted and criticized by the art world establishment, but eventually influenced a score of later artists, including Nicole Eisenman, Amy Sillman, Carroll Dunham, Georg Baselitz, and David Salle.

Deeply influenced by the Surrealists, **Joseph Cornell** (American, 1903-1972) created intricate assemblages and shadow box tableaux in the vein of the Dada artists Marcel Duchamp and Kurt Schwitters, and was included in the Museum of Modern Art's 1936 exhibition, *Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism*. "Fanny Cerrito in Ondine," one of these box constructions, is an homage to the Italian ballet dancer and choreographer and typifies Cornell's meticulous sense of detail and mystery.

Richard Diebenkorn (American, 1922–1993), an exemplary figure in postwar American Abstraction, created innovative figurative and representational works in the late 1950s through the mid-1960s. During this phase of his career, he turned against the prevailing tide of Abstract Expressionism and returned to the possibilities of representational figure painting. Working directly from a live model, Diebenkorn masterfully explores the intricate interplay within intimate interiors between formal rigor, studied observation, and diverse mark making. Whereas his abstract pictures are characterized by lush fields of color, the examples of figurative work here are intimate studies, markedly washed of color yet no less powerful for it.

Hedda Sterne (1910-2011), a Romanian émigré often noted as the only woman in the famous Life Magazine photograph of New York School Abstract Expressionists dubbed "The Irascibles", created imagistic work that refused to adhere to stringent classification. Sterne worked fluidly

between abstraction and figuration. Deeply related to her Baldanders series, the works included in this exhibition are complex line drawings that weave together to create haunting, enigmatic portraits.

Akin to Diebenkorn, the contemporary practice of **Jeronimo Elespe's** (b. 1975, lives in Madrid) is a focused meditation on the artist's life at home and in the studio. Regarded for his paintings on aluminum, Elespe's work merges fantasy with memory in dreamlike renderings of interior scenes and representative portraits of family and friends, the inclusion of which suggests an autobiographical narrative.

The geometrically-inflected, mixed media work of **Volker Hüller** (b. 1976, Forchheim, Germany) is in conversation with the figurative continuum. Born in Germany and currently based in New York, Hüller's practice reconciles the deeply-felt strokes of European Expressionism with a decidedly American view. His paintings, realized in various degrees of figuration and embedded within geometric abstraction, explore the modernistic tendencies of the Cubists, and channel Klee and Picasso in their approach to space and form.

Kristin Baker, (b. 1975, Stamford, Connecticut) creates dynamic paintings of kinetic energy rendered in an exuberant palette and a clear Futurist lineage. She has worked in both the figurative and abstract traditions, reconciling the lessons of each into a sui generis amalgam (her paintings often employ PVC, acrylics, and Mylar). Her work, which has often depicted race cars and tracks as a means of exploiting speed, integrate sharp, angular forms and translucent washes of vivid color that feel both futuristic and deeply embedded in the visual vocabulary of 20th Century Modernism.

About Van Doren Waxter

Established in 2013, Van Doren Waxter specializes in American Abstraction from 1950-1990 exclusively representing the James Brooks Foundation, the Richard Diebenkorn Foundation, works on paper from the Al Held Foundation, the Harvey Quaytman Estate, the Alan Shields Estate, and the Hedda Sterne Foundation. Additionally, the gallery handles secondary market works, specializing in John Chamberlain, Mark di Suvero, Sam Francis, Helen Frankenthaler, Hans Hofmann, Ellsworth Kelly, Franz Kline, John McLaughlin and Frank Stella, among others.

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