

GALERIE FATIHA SELAM

Jean-Philippe Pernot | Untitled

5 December – 11 January 2014
58 rue Chapon

Galerie Fatiha Selam is delighted to present a solo exhibition of thirty unique, small format photographs by photographer and filmmaker Jean-Philippe Pernot.

Pernot's practice considers the tension between human life and an awareness of mortality. Hung in lines like studies from an anthropological museum, his black and white *Vanités* echo classical Memento Mori, with still lifes, composed around a central skull, drawing upon seminal works by artists including Pieter Claesz.

The exhibition at Galerie Fatiha Selam acknowledges both the historical origins of the *Vanité* and its contemporary repercussions. Set in modern-day Wall Street, the series *Les Poupées* combines notions of death with the trappings of contemporary material culture. Here, dolls - found abandoned by the artist in the flea markets and second hand shops of Paris - wander the streets of America's financial capital in high heels and lingerie, their heads replaced by the hollow skulls of birds. These hybrids both reference and re-invent the ancient deities which they invoke, merging hyper-sexuality with loaded symbols of capitalism and patriotism.

Marked with pits and fissures, the human skulls central to *Les Vanités* express the transient nature of the human form - and, by extension, of the artist himself. This idea is re-iterated by the Pernot's medium: using a camera dating from 1860, he produces prints using the wet collodion method, situating his subjects on dark, diffuse backgrounds which connote age. Capturing a fleeting, non-replicable moment, the photograph itself acknowledges the passage of time and, with it, death.

For Pernot, this awareness of mortality is not problematic, but defines the role of the artist as a figure who carries on conversations begun by his predecessors. Inspired by Baudelaire's *Les Phares*, Pernot views artistic production as an exploration of ideas which have long shaped the work of philosophers, artists and writers. Following ideas expressed in Nietzsche's aphorisms, Pernot sees any attempt to overcome our own mortality as "conceit". Rather than stunting creativity, however, this awareness of death allows Pernot - as Nietzsche stated - to know "the many small and quite microscopic features of the soul" - to become "the master of miniature".

Works from the series *Les Apparitions* express an antithetical sense of life. Captured over a period of long exposure, pale bodies emerge from black backgrounds as a series of blurred, undulating outlines. This record of movement exists in sharp contrast to the stillness of *Vanités*, communicating an almost visceral sense of life. The soft flesh of Pernot's models stands in notable contrast to inert skulls, with the moving female form carrying with it a sensuality, and potential for life - rendered all the more complex, yet valuable, for its proximity to death.

About the Artist:

Born in 1966, Jean-Philippe Pernot lives and works in Paris. Recent projects have included *L'Aube*, a film which previewed in the Short Film Corner at Cannes Film Festival 2013. The artist has travelled extensively, working and exhibiting in countries including the US, France, Spain, and Bangladesh, where he created the JP Prize for Contemporary Photography, which held its first edition in Dhaka in 2012. Teaching and the exchange of ideas are an essential part of his practice; recent educational projects directed by Pernot have been held at the Alliance Française, Dhaka and ULAB University, Dhaka.

Previous solo exhibitions include: Galerie Lehalle, Paris (2012); Abbyac, Villeneuve les Avignon (2011); Espace Beaujon, Paris (2010); Bangal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhaka, Bangladesh (2010); and Agora Gallery, New York (2002). Group exhibitions include: Parcours de l'Art, Avignon (2011); Lille Art Fair (2010); Galerie d'Est et d'Ouest – a Celebration of the 150th anniversary of Franco-Japanese diplomatic relations (2009); and New York Fashion Week, New York (2004). Pernot is the author of books including: Cul-Linaire (2009); Tokyo (2008); Magenta Paradise (2007); Phot'Art; Expressions rupestres (2006); and Doux Leurre, created in participation with Didier Cry.

About Galerie Fatiha Selam:

Fatiha Selam opened her gallery in Paris's Marais in September 2012, having spent 10 years working in galleries in the city's Saint-Germain-des-Près district and the US. Located on rue Chapon, at the heart of one of Paris's foremost arts districts, her 65m2. space presents a changing programme of exhibitions by an international selection of both emerging and established artists. Her work is characterised by a spirit of energy and generosity, and a desire to share the art she loves.

Exhibition Information:

Location: 58 rue Chapon, Paris 75003

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11am – 7pm

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