

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Magnus Plessen

12 Rue du Grand Cerf

May 18 – July 5

Opening May 18, 12-8pm

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Magnus Plessen. Drawing on the formal techniques of painting to push the boundaries of the medium, Plessen uses defined brushstrokes, and a process of adding paint to the canvas and subsequently subtracting it to create spatial depth in his work. Incorporating abstract forms and figurative elements into each composition, Plessen investigates the conflict between the two modes of representation. Rather than evaluate abstraction from a painterly perspective, Plessen explores the way in which abstraction reflects our life experiences and the way we view our surrounding environment, as we move variously between states of disorientation and confusion to moments of clarity and understanding.

Painted in a palette of bright, vivid colors, Plessen's newest body of work features abstract, nearly geometrical elements, combined with fragments of body parts that appear where one might otherwise expect a human figure. Plessen conceived of the series after reading Michel Foucault's "Manet and the Object of Painting," in which Foucault argues that Manet is the forerunner of abstraction. Critical of Foucault's thesis, Plessen created a painting based on Manet's *Dans la Serre*, composing a visual counter-argument to Foucault's point. Rather than assume that the flatness of Manet's work led to inevitable abstraction, Plessen explores the way in which the two-dimensional nature of the work can be transformed and advanced, leading to a sense of three-dimensional movement in the painting instead. Plessen describes the experience of revisiting *Dans la Serre* while reading Foucault's essay: "By identifying the hands as horizontal and vertical orientations on a two-dimensional surface, the coherence of the scene is severely disturbed, the unengaged conversation between the two figures becomes unimportant. Body parts become independent of their place or function in the context of this image – jumping out of the dense green background moving around the point where they are attached to the canvas through the hands pointing down and left."

Moving away from the notion of using figuration to create an illusion on the canvas, Plessen seeks new ways of conveying the three-dimensional on a two-dimensional plane. Inverting the traditional concept of ascribing a single orientation to each work, Plessen has created paintings that can be rotated, transforming the relationship between subject and object, and inviting viewers to reconsider their perspective. As the orientation of the work changes, so too does the formal composition of the painting, creating a sense of dynamic movement within each work.

Magnus Plessen was born in 1967 in Hamburg, Germany. His work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at various venues including: the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany; MoMA PS1, New York, and the Centre Pompidou, Paris. In 2003, his work was included in the 50th Venice Biennale.

Marisa Merz
515 West 24th Street
April 5 - June 8, 2013

Ugo Rondinone
"soul"
530 West 21st Street
May 11 – July 3, 2013

For further information, please contact Abby Margulies
+1 212 206 9300 or amargulies@gladstonegallery.com
Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm, Saturday, 12pm – 6pm
New York gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm