

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

## **Cyprien Gaillard** **“Today Diggers, Tomorrow Dickens”**

530 West 21st Street

November 9 – December 21, 2013

Opening November 8, 6 – 8 pm

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present our first exhibition with Cyprien Gaillard, “Today Diggers, Tomorrow Dickens.” For this ambitious and complex presentation, Gaillard has created two complementary bodies of sculptural works that explore notions of regeneration, ruination, and decay, turning his eye to the relationship between evolution and erosion – a thread that weaves through much of his work. Navigating the concept of the altered readymade through an anthropological lens, Gaillard has incorporated processed natural and industrial materials to achieve an equilibrium that reflects the way in which our society simultaneously progresses and reverts in the realm of the bleak.

Inspiration for the exhibition title came from a series of mural slogans used to conceal a raw building site, home of the future performing arts center in Beverly Hills. Intended as a playful tag suggesting the inconvenience caused by ongoing construction as being an experience worth enduring, the slogan struck Gaillard as ironic. As a Dickensian universe connotes poverty, hardship, and ruin, Gaillard thought that the message, rather than suggesting progression and growth, hinted at a reversion to darker times. The works that Gaillard has created for the exhibition evoke this contradiction, inviting viewers to consider the ways in which our vision of progress simultaneously leads us back toward a more dismal landscape and unyielding reality.

On the first floor of the exhibition, visitors encounter a series of sculptures ranging from small-scale to monumental. Entering the gallery as if in reverse, viewers are presented with an opposing perspective of the sculptural works – a series of excavator machine parts, removed from their conventional setting. Placed directly on the floor, with the teeth once used for digging now acting as a sculptural anchor, the excavator heads are set with deftly carved pieces of onyx, inserted where the buckets once attached to the machines. Sourced from a variety of locations, the excavator heads have been washed and waxed, their resilience to the outdoors rendered defunct by the process necessary to preserve them as sculptural works. Once part of a machine used as a means for destruction, to encourage rejuvenation through building, these pieces, now preserved, begin a fossilization process of their own. Though the diggers have caused destruction in their lifetime, in their arrested manner Gaillard has preserved them, imbuing them with new purpose.

Bringing together a diverse range of material, Gaillard suggests a certain geographical mapping within the works. The white and yellow minerals have been sourced from Iran and Utah, respectively, and together with the machinery, found in California and made by Esco, Caterpillar, Bobcat etc. – American companies with international reach – they evoke the global nature of a tendency towards endless progress and the necessary ruination implicit in that process.

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The notion of conceptual mapping, as well as more formal decisions, act as points of connection between the two series of works on view. The color yellow persists as paint residue on the excavator heads and is reflected again in the yellow-hued banded calcite, which, though mined by similar machinery through a process of destruction, now rests in perfect equilibrium in the grip of the sculpture – an essential part of the work. The color yellow is present in the body of work on view on the gallery's second floor as well, which features a series of sculptural works made out of back issues of National Geographic magazine, whose covers are outlined in yellow. These works are composed of pages from the magazine, cut with one single artistic gesture, and then folded together to hold them in place. Though they evoke a collage-like appearance, the works are held together simply by the tension incurred on the paper during the cutting and folding process – a tension that is echoed in the stress caused to the onyx held in the grip of the excavator heads.

Gaillard sifted through copies of the magazine from the past fifty years, selecting individual pages from various issues, and bringing these disparate pages together to create a geographical map within the confines of each folding on view. Each work is created out of five different pages, whose full nature is concealed by virtue of the folding process. Selecting pages of issues from different decades, Gaillard has brought together fragments from distinct historical periods, distilling a particular moment in time. By putting these pages side by side with one another, Gaillard has created a dialogue within each piece, navigating time and space to create one unified present vision. Placed like scientific specimens beneath vitrines, the works are presented as small portals into history – one that is both real and contained on the pages, and one that is fabricated by virtue of the disparate pairings of the pages.

Taken together, these two series of works reflect Gaillard's longstanding interest in artifact and preservation. Though the excavator heads and the magazines were both once lively tools used by people for creation and learning, they now stand as objects frozen in time – still relics that reflect a dystopian vision of our society.

Gaillard was born in Paris and lives and works in Berlin and New York. He has been the subject of solo exhibitions at a number of major institutions, including: MoMA PS1, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin; Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan, Italy; Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland.

**Rosemarie Trockel**

515 West 24th Street

November 9 – December 21, 2013

**Gedi Sibony**

12 Rue du Grand Cerf, Brussels

October 26 – December 20, 2013

For further information, please contact Abby Margulies

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New York gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10 am – 6 pm, Saturday, 12 pm – 6 pm