

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

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ADAM HELMS
Uncanny Valley

BOESKY EAST

September 7 – October 5, 2014 | Opening reception: Sunday, September 7, 6 to 8 pm

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Uncanny Valley*, a solo exhibition of new works by Adam Helms. This is the artist's third solo show at the gallery, and the first to be held at BOESKY EAST.

Adam Helms mines imagery from mass media and journalism to repurpose and challenge established visual tropes. Helms is an artist-meets-anthropologist, collecting a range of source material from film stills, comic books, magazines, and the Internet to inform the concerns of his work. Whether through paintings and drawings on paper, prints, or light boxes, Helms reveals how images can be reproduced and recontextualized to take on different narrative interpretations and symbolic qualities as art objects.

With his latest body of work, Helms takes as a point of departure a hypothesis developed in the 1970's named the "Uncanny Valley." This theory, applied to the field of human aesthetics, measures an observer's level of discomfort and unease when presented with something that mimics a human or that appears to have human features. Helms incorporates the ethos of the Uncanny Valley into his own work through the use of a repeated element in gouache paintings on paper sourced from film stills. Large, swollen, and bulbous noses and ears grow from the faces of each portrait (a gesture of iconoclasm reminiscent perhaps of an aged, bizarre Mickey Mouse). Using stills from *Dr. Strangelove*, *Apocalypse Now*, and *Dawn of the Dead*, to name a few, Helms questions these representations of male power, posturing with a phallic, Freudian sensibility. He renders the images identifiable yet foreign, grotesque, and ultimately uncanny.

Alongside these gouache pieces, Helms presents a large-scale laser etching of the frontispiece for Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* – a 17th century text regarded as one of the earliest written examples of Social Contract Theory. Crafted in bold fields of color with aniline dye, and laser-etched onto hand-milled paper mounted to panel, the work provides temporality to the exhibition and compares an archetype of the past with the more contemporary subjects and themes of the gouache works. Together, both projects convey Helms' continuous interest in 'reading' and questioning the authenticity of visual material.



Brooklyn based artist, Adam Helms (b. 1974, Tucson, Arizona) attended the Rhode Island School of Design (1997) and received his MFA from Yale University, School of Art (2004). His work has been widely exhibited at institutions including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. The artist's work is included in the permanent collections of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Perez Art Museum, Miami; and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

For further information about Adam Helms, please contact Adrian Turner at Adrian@marianneboeskygallery.com or 212.680.9889. For press information, please contact Shayna McClelland at press@marianneboeskygallery.com or 347.744.5991.