

# Esther Schipper

AA Bronson  
*White Flag*  
January 23—February 28, 2015

Dedicated to General Idea 1969-1994

Esther Schipper is pleased to present AA Bronson's *White Flag*, the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

On September 11, 2001, AA Bronson was caught in Toronto when his flight home to New York was canceled. He watched in real time on television, as two airplanes punctured the twin towers of the World Trade Center, and then as the towers collapsed. It was seven days before he could rejoin his husband in lower Manhattan. What he found there is inscribed indelibly on his brain: a thick chalky dust of glass, concrete, paper, asbestos and human flesh that covered everything; and American flags, everywhere.

*White Flag* presents seven paintings, each constructed of an American flag, purchased on eBay, mounted on raw linen, and coated in layers of an antique preparation of rabbit skin glue, chalk, and honey. This compound was, historically, used to prepare the ground upon which a painting was painted; it is literally the foundation of a history of painting. But here the ground becomes the painting itself, shrouding each flag—each with its history implicit in torn edges, holes and rips—in an elegiac ashen presence.

The title *White Flag* is not merely descriptive of the paintings: it alludes to the plant White Flag, or Cemetery Iris, a white flower popular in Muslim and Christian cemeteries, cultivated for more than 3500 years. The plant is highly poisonous, invasive, and infertile. Indigenous to North Africa and the Middle East, it traveled with the Muslims to Spain and then with the Spanish to America. In Texas it is referred to as "the flower that you can't kill." While engaging in a larger task of mourning a personal, cultural and political past, the work also addresses migration, and the uneasy convergence of Muslim and Christian histories.

These paintings evoke Jasper Johns' iconic white-on-white *White Flag* of 1955. They echo General Idea's *White AIDS* paintings and their *Pla©ebo (Manzoni)* of 1993. Although AA Bronson's nod to Johns' work is clearly intentional, Johns' early Pop Art paintings disavow the symbolic meaning of their flags. Bronson, on the other hand charges these flags with personal, historical, and transnational significance, and clothes them in funereal attire.

# *Esther Schipper*

AA Bronson claims that these works came to him in a dream, and demanded to be 'painted', or perhaps, erased. As HIV and AIDS erased Bronson's generation and General Idea itself, and as the spectral dust of 9/11 erased the downtown Manhattan scene of 2001, so these paintings speak to loss, absence, and mourning.

The artist wishes to thank Elizabeth and Piotr Porebski of Hase & Honig for their collaboration in the production of the works.

AA Bronson was born Michael Wayne Tims 1946 in Vancouver, Canada. He co-founded the artists' group General Idea with Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal in 1969. The three artists worked and lived together until the deaths of Felix and Jorge in 1994.

Recent selected solo exhibitions include: *The Temptation of AA Bronson (Revised)*, Salzburger Kunstverein and Grazer Kunstverein (upcoming, 2015); *AA Bronson: Life and Works*, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto (2014); *AA Bronson: Tent of Healing*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2013); *The Temptation of AA Bronson*, Witte de With, Centre for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2013); *Invocation of the Queer Spirits* (with Peter Hobbs), Plug In ICA, Winnipeg and Creative Time, New York (2008/2009).

Recent selected group exhibitions include: *AA Bronson's HOUSE OF SHAME at Burning Down the House*, 10th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, South Korea (2014), *Love Aids Riot Sex 2: Art Aids Activism 1995 Until Today*, NGbK, Berlin (2014); *Surplus Authors*, Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2012); *Composed: Identity, Politics, Sex*, Jewish Museum, New York (2012); *Hide/Seek*, National Portrait Gallery Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, and Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn (2010); *Singular Visions*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2010); *Love's Body: art in the age of AIDS*, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo (2010).

AA Bronson currently lives and works in Toronto and Berlin.

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*WHITE FLAG*  
JANUARY 23–FEBRUARY 28, 2015



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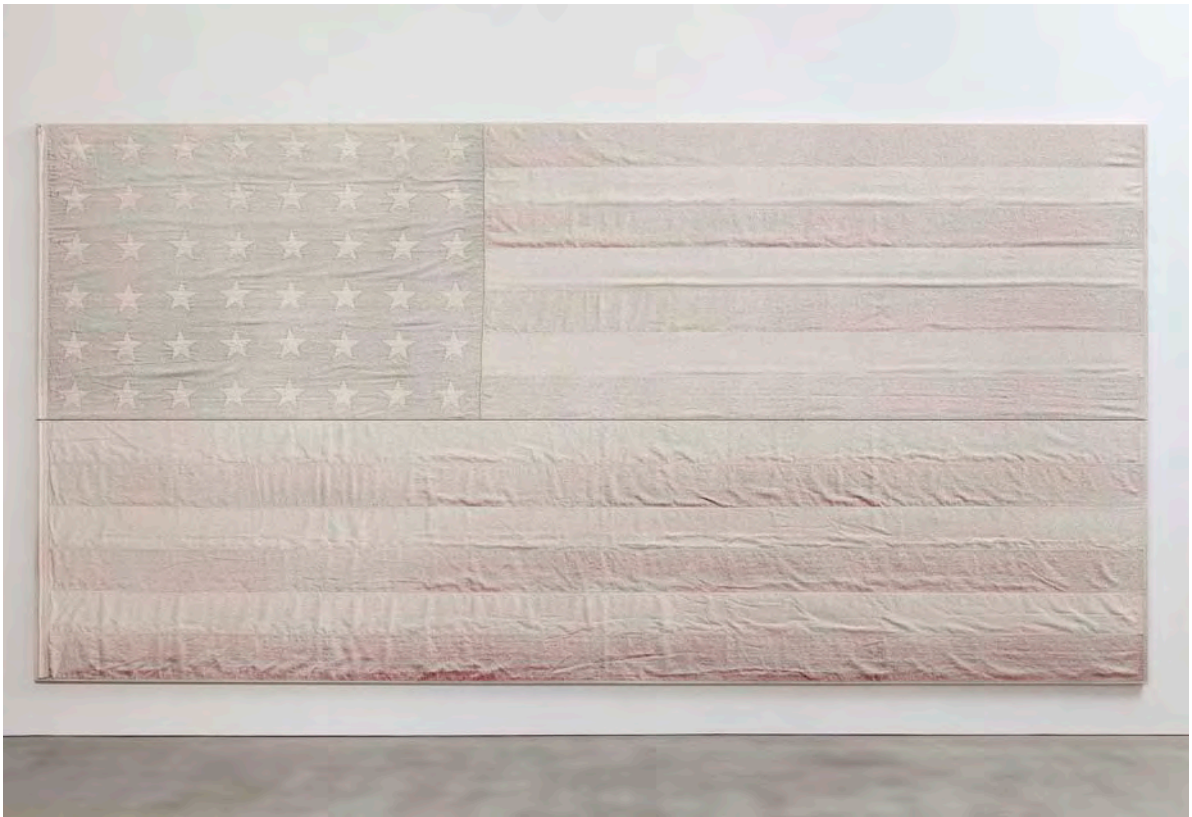
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*White Flag #9, 2014*  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on wool, cotton and cotton rope on linen  
134 x 506 cm and 118 x 506 cm, 2 parts  
252 x 506 cm, overall  
Unique  
(AAB 037)



*White Flag #9, 2014*  
Detail



*White Flag #9, 2014*

*White Flag #8, 2015*  
*White Flag #3, 2015*  
*White Flag #2, 2015*

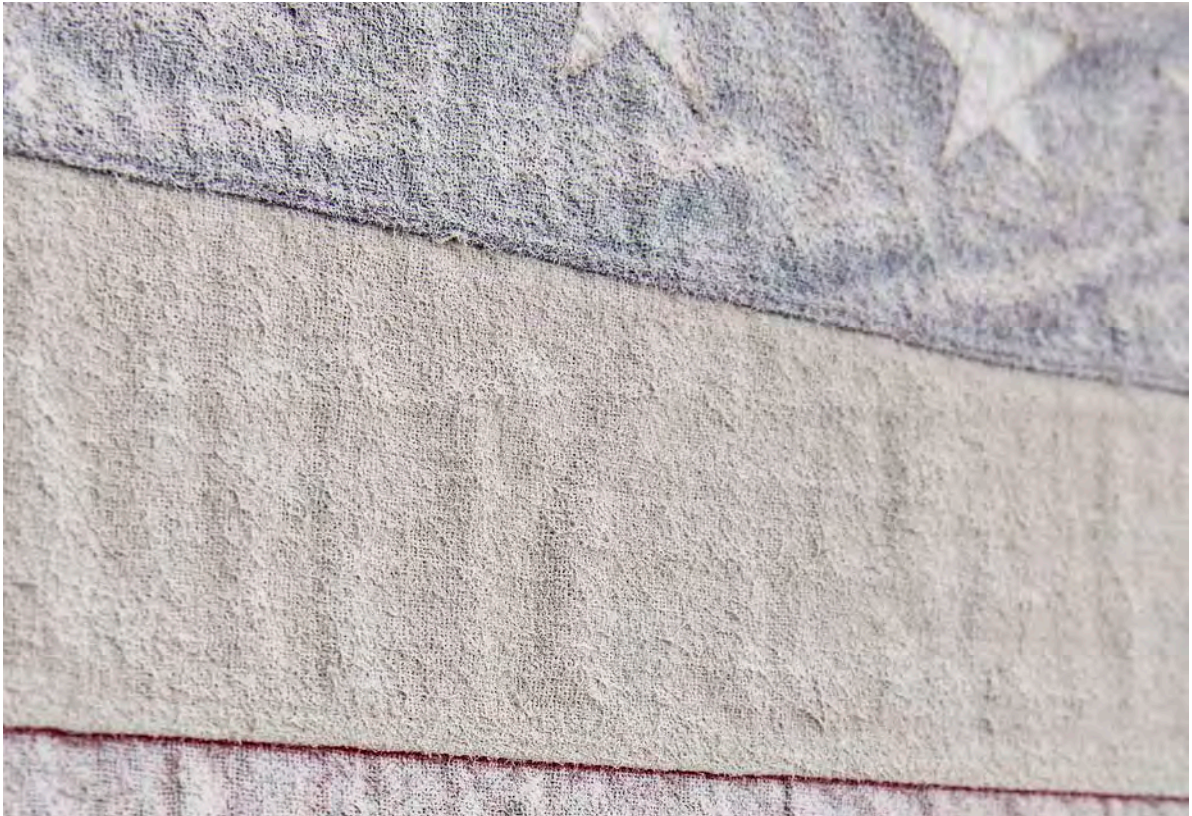




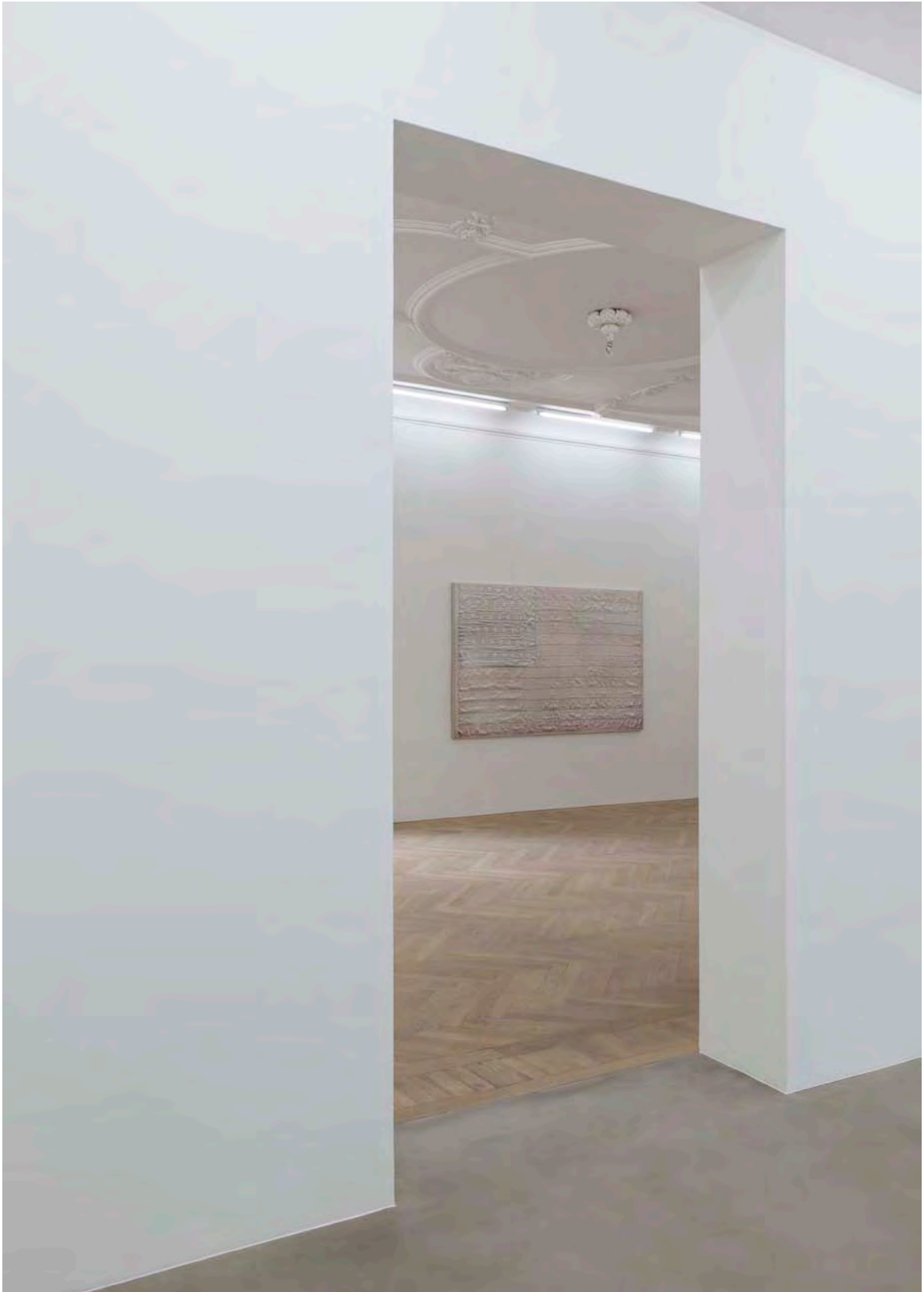
*White Flag #8*, 2015  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on linen, cotton and cotton rope on linen  
150 x 290 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 036)



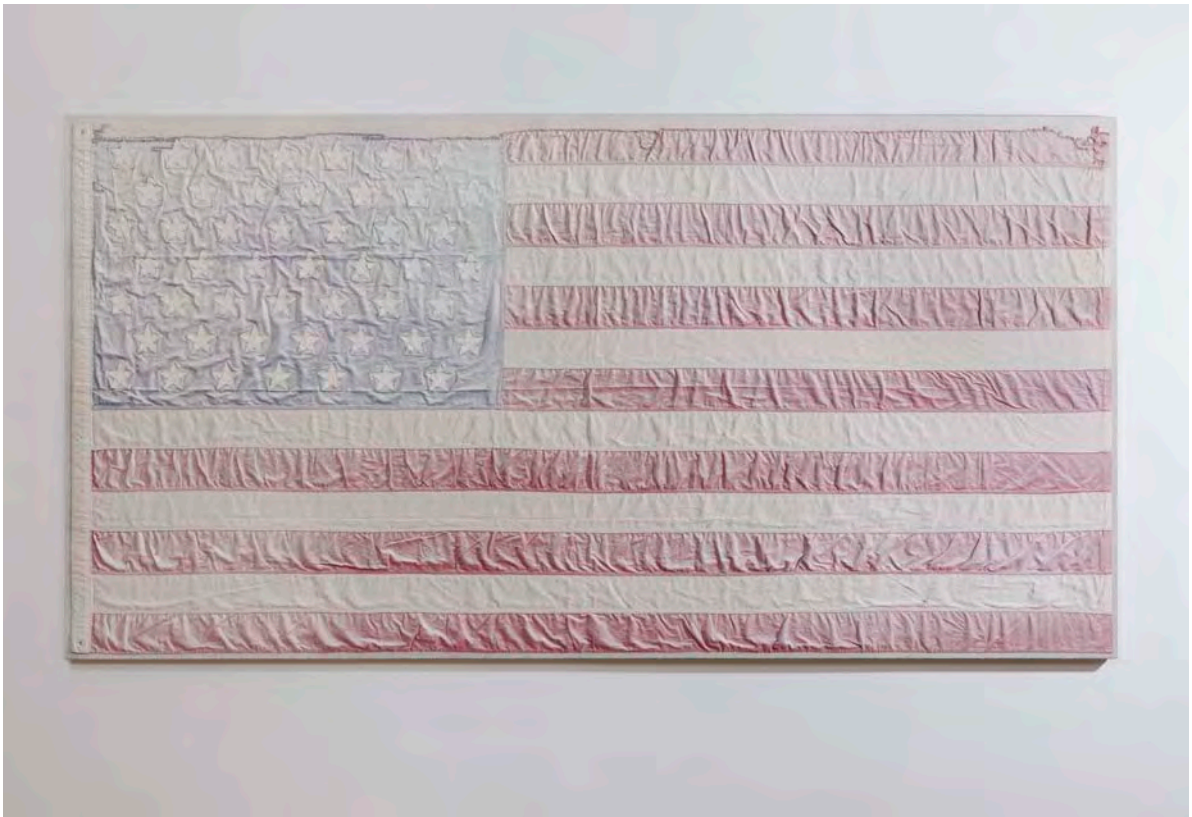
*White Flag #3, 2015*  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on cotton and metal grommet on linen  
94,5 x 156 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 031)



*White Flag #2*, 2015  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on wool, cotton and metal grommet on linen  
112 x 181 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 030)



*White Flag #1, 2015*



*White Flag #1*, 2015  
*White Flag #5*, 2015  
*White Flag #6*, 2015

*White Flag #5*, 2015  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on cotton and metal grommet on linen  
143 x 280 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 033)



*White Flag #1*, 2015  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on wool, cotton and metal grommet on linen  
148 x 234 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 029)



*White Flag #1, 2015*  
Detail



*White Flag #6*, 2015  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on wool, cotton and metal grommet on linen  
160,5 x 235,5 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 034)

*White Flag #6*, 2015  
*White Flag #4*, 2015





*White Flag #4*, 2015  
Rabbit skin glue, Champagne chalk, raw honey  
on cotton and metal grommet on linen  
58,2 x 86,5 cm  
Unique  
(AAB 032)



*White Flag #4*, 2015  
Detail

PHOTOS: © ANDREA ROSSETTI

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