

press release

press release

PAUL P.
The Rex Prisms

19 March - 24 April 2016
private view: Saturday 19 March 6.30 – 8.30 pm

Maureen Paley is pleased to announce the second solo exhibition at the gallery by Canadian artist Paul P. featuring new figurative and abstract oil on linen works, ink on paper drawings and wooden furniture sculptures.

The exhibition title refers to the artist Rex Whistler, whose work as a painter and muralist was cut short by his early death during the last days of WWII. The artistic lives that made up his milieu, The Bright Young Things, suffered from an extreme anxiety leading up to the catastrophe of war, a form of both depression and resistance that can only be fully understood in hindsight. This effete group of young prodigies, artists and poets performed as decadents wielding their high-profile frivolity in proto-punk acts of insolence towards the older generation (whose attitudes of chauvinism and philistinism they held responsible for the horrors of the First World War). From this stance they were able to create a sincere position of dedication to the pursuit of beauty and a spirit of civilization stemming from a platonic ideal. However, their dandyism (which thrived on fragility) was doomed to defeat as a part of this enterprise. Their ideals were challenged by the long shadow of a war which appeared to them as a magnification and fierce embodiment of the hostile forces they had actively resisted in contemporary life. The Romantic, Byronic accomplishment in their art finds parallels with other cultural crescendos such as the triad of physical/political/spiritual fervor which defined gay-liberation just before the devastation of AIDS or of the then radical art-for-art-sake moment of Whistler, Wilde and Godwin as it occurred on the seismic cusp of the new century.

There is a small etched-glass monument made to honour Rex Whistler by his brother Laurence Whistler housed in Salisbury Cathedral called The Rex Prism. Beyond the eulogistic, its 'prismatic effect' influences the many strands that are placed together to form the focus of this exhibition with inspiration from him.

Paul P. 2016

Selected exhibitions include *Civilization Coordinates*, Scrap Metal Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 2015, *The Homosexual Lovers Throughout the Ages Party (2014)*, Broadway 1602, New York, USA, 2014, *Escritoire Nancy*, Andrew Roth, New York, USA, 2013, *Doe Ye Nexte Thyng*, The Suburban, Oak Park, USA, 2013, *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*, Illingworth Kerr Gallery, Calgary, Canada, 2012, *The "X" Factor in Beholding*, Tempo Rubato, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2012, *Dry Neptune*, Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia, Italy, 2011, *Dusks*, Lamplights, *The Power Plant*, Toronto, Canada, 2007, *Place Names, the Place*, Daniel Reich Gallery, New York, USA, 2007, *Blue and Opal*, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria, 2006, *The Yellow Room*, Marc Selwyn Fine Art, Los Angeles, USA, 2006, *A Grey Note*, Gallery Side 2, Tokyo, Japan, 2005.

Selected group exhibitions include *Whitney Biennial 2014*, New York, USA, 2014, *Les paris sont ouverts*, Freud Museum, London, UK, 2011, *Compass: drawings from the MoMA*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany, 2011, *Male*, curated by Vince Aletti, Maureen Paley, London, UK, 2010, *Compass in Hand*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA, 2009, *The Boys of Summer*, The Fireplace Project, East Hampton, *Male*, White Columns, New York, USA / Presentation House Gallery, Vancouver, Canada, 2008, *People Take Pictures of Each Other*, LaMontagne Gallery, Boston, USA, 2007, *Crack the Sky*, Biennale de Montreal, Montreal, 2007, *Painting as Fact – Fact as Fiction*, de Pury and Luxembourg, Zurich, 2007, *People*, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina, Naples, 2006, *Origins of Harold*, Deitch Projects, New York, USA, 2004, *Republic of Love*, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada, 2004.

Paul P.'s works are held in the following public collections: Museum of Modern Art, New York, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Art, Providence, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, Whitney Museum of American Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The artist would like to acknowledge funding support from the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario.