

3 0 3 G A L L E R Y

For Immediate Release

KAREL FUNK

July 20 - August 18, 2017

Opening reception Thursday, July 20, 6 – 8 pm



303 Gallery is proud to present our fourth exhibition of paintings by Karel Funk. The exhibition showcases Funk's unique ability to utilize a hyper-real painting style in creating visual and psychological abstractions.

In a conscious inversion of portraiture's traditional function, Funk's subjects are all seen from the back, swathed in hooded coats made of synthetic and technologically engineered materials. The subjects' identities become anonymous, enveloped and displaced by their garments' contours and colors. The paintings become purely formal, floating abstractions of light, shadow, and rippling fabrics which recall Renaissance and Flemish 17th century portraiture. With an almost trompe l'oeil flourish, the human origin of the subject disappears into its stark white backdrop, with an emerging dimensionality that is tactile and engulfing.

Painted slightly larger than life-size, the figures are imposing and disquieting at first glance, belying a material magnetism that beckons further investigation. Every crease in each hood seems to suggest its own story, its own contribution to the mythology of the individual sitter and the group as a whole. Born out of Funk's interest in the mediation between intimacy and personal space experienced on a packed subway car, these folds and creases take on a metaphorical aspect, traces of human activity recorded into ostensibly inert and impermeable materials. The smallest details begin to suggest larger connections, as choices in attire and their functional properties also suggest modern extrapolations of traditional kinship and clan mentalities. In his negation of identity in portraiture, Funk's highly intensive practice has - seemingly in spite of itself - developed into a simple yet inscrutable index of the inescapable human tendency to negotiate selfhood.

Karel Funk was born in 1971. He received a BFA from the University of Manitoba in 1997 and an MFA from Columbia University in New York in 2003. Solo exhibitions include Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2016; Rochester Art Center, MN, 2009; and Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montreal, 2007. He has been included in group exhibitions at venues including the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki; Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art, Winnipeg; and Fondation Antoine de Galbert, Paris. Funk's work is held in major museum collections, including the Guggenheim and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Funk lives and works in Winnipeg, Canada.

303 Gallery is open Monday-Friday from 10 am - 5 pm. For further information please visit us at www.303gallery.com or contact Anabel Wold. For press inquiries, please contact Renee Delosh at press@303gallery.com.

Upcoming exhibition: EVA ROTHSCHILD | September 15 – October 21

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