

Mireille Mosler Ltd.

Looking Back

June 12 – July 26, 2008

For immediate release

Mireille Mosler, Ltd. is pleased to announce *Looking Back*, a summer group show with works by Philip-Lorca di Corcia, Karen Kilimnik, Simon Linke, Dave McDermott, Robert Melee, Jonathan Monk, Harvey Opgenorth, Clifford Owens, Nina Pohl, David Schutter, Molly Springfield and Cheyney Thompson.

Most artists are interested in the artists who preceded them and in art historical concepts. Some artists and entire movements even abandon the claim to invention, to instead look at and explore the influence of historical art. In *Memento Mori* and *Tease*, Mireille Mosler Ltd. presented both old masters and contemporary works together. In *Looking Back*, contemporary artists reference their predecessors and earlier art historical movements. The references span centuries, from Dutch Old Masters via impressionism to early performance art. Rather than appropriating imagery, the artists integrate, and often question, the groundbreaking ideas specific to their referents with their own practice and treatment of medium. Sometimes, the references are not immediately visible, especially where artists are employing a more conceptual appropriation.

The 1984 photograph *Gianni* by **Philip-Lorca di Corcia** shows a reclining male figure in an open window frame, the cityscape of Rome in the background. The deliberately staged pose and the artificial lighting, combined with the panoramic landscape, evoke the complex picture planes of early Renaissance painting such as Jan van Eyck. In another photograph, *Untitled (Welle II)* by **Nina Pohl**, a detail of a Gustave Courbet painting is photographed in such a way that the surface resin reflects the light-source. While this seems amateurish at first glance, the reflection of the flash purposefully erases the original citation and illuminates the painted ocean.

The title of **Karen Kilimnik's** *The wilds of Fairmount Park from the taxi 9 pm from the train station from Washington*, would not immediately reveal the eminent reference to early eighteenth century Romantic landscapists. Kilimnik often introduces historical events combined with present pop culture. Here she depicts a recent trip, reminiscent of the *plein air* French Barbizon painters like Corot. Also concerned with nature and representing landscape was the nineteenth century art critic John Ruskin, who is the subject of **Molly Springfield's** meticulous drawings after photocopies of his treaties. Ruskin believed that art was essentially concerned with communicating an understanding of nature and that authentic artists should reject inherited conventions in order to study effects of form and color by direct observation. Although Springfield does not follow Ruskin's directions by going into nature, she delivers his thoughts in an even more direct way.

Dave McDermott creates collages and watercolors on the pages of an aged 1970s Claude Monet catalog. The iconic persona of Monet, strolling the grounds of Giverny, is replaced with McDermott's own exploration in perception and light, obscuring the normally recognizable references and commenting on how Monet's work is perceived today. **Jonathan Monk** also alters and obscures original meaning in *Everything and Nothing*, an ink on paper diptych referencing Alighiero e Boetti's "Lavori Biro" (ballpoint pen drawings). Like the Boetti, Monk's drawings are composed of fields of tiny ballpoint-pen markings that conceal underlying text. However, Monk's drawing does not allow random letters and punctuation to be exposed, thus revealing no clues to the reading of the text.

Simon Linke takes a more direct approach by appropriating a detail of a John Currin painting, as published in a Gagolian advertisement in *Artforum*. Linke's consistently appropriated paintings from *Artforum* depict art as it is represented in the commercial space of an advertisement, and seem to reclaim art from commerce by painting it in a more formal manner. In contrast, **David Schutter**'s painting *Untitled (after GSMB vRi)* explores the underlying structures of Rembrandt's *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* from 1655 in the Berlin Gemäldegalerie. Schutter paints the composition from memory in complex grey tones, reconstituting the brushwork and use of light and color of the Dutch Master.

The sculpture of **Robert Melee** juxtaposes two very different traditions: Ab-Ex painting and figurative sculpture. In *Bust*, Melee veils the face of a traditional bust with plaster and colorful enamel paint, effectively turning the façade into a 3-dimensional painting, while from the sides the underlying sculpted bust is visible. **Cheney Thompson**'s *Untitled* follows the artist's earlier investigations in the constructions of perspective, silkscreen processes and the use of the Bézier curve. The Bézier curve is widely used in architecture and industrial design to model smooth curves, and is employed in the tilted arcs of Richard Serra and Frank Gehry's architecture, and here, in the seam that disjoints dotted silk-screened patterns within the flattened 2-dimensional space of the canvas.

Clifford Owens and **Harvey Opgenorth** both explore and employ performance art. Owens's large drawings were created through a collaborative effort with Joan Jonas in a performance at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2005. After strapping charcoal and graphite to Owen's arms and legs, Jonas used Owen's body as a drawing instrument. Documentation of Opgenorth's one hour performances *Museum Camouflage* presents the artist attempting to camouflage himself in front of well-known works of art. We see Opgenorth facetiously standing in front of a Mark Rothko in the Chicago Art Institute, a Christopher Wool in the Milwaukee Art Museum, a Matisse at MOMA, and an Ellsworth Kelly painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Looking Back will be on view at Mireille Mosler Ltd., 35 East 67th Street, New York, NY. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. For more information, please contact the gallery at (212) 249-4195 or info@mireillemoslerltd.com.