

“SHOT”
WITH

Ingri Haraldsen
Haroun Haward
Merlin Ramos
Fred Sorrell
Louise Thomas

Private View Thursday 1st of August 2013
6:30 – 9:00PM

2nd – 31st of August 2013

Shot within the prism of imagination...

In the past, painting was long a form of literal social commentary, and for hundreds of years it was the most accurate way in which artists could depict the world around them. With the advent of photography, along with the fast-paced social, political and environmental changes that we have expected in the last century, painting has shifted away from its traditional role to embrace a more cerebral reflection of the human condition. Here, Kristin Hjellegjerde | ArtEco Gallery presents the group exhibition *SHOT*, featuring works by five artists who share an interest in exploring the transformation of the human being within the modern context. Through the works of Haroun Haward, Ingri Haraldsen, Merlin Ramos, Fred Sorrell and Louise Thomas, we are presented with the question: “How are we, as artists, psychologically affected by the changing cultural landscape and what is our response to this?”

By dealing with the shift in response to art, and its evolution from personal observation to dealing with one’s place in the global community, *SHOT* seeks to explore the disconnect between humans and the landscape, leading the medium of painting away from traditional subjects, transforming the way we think and interact within the space in which we live and communicate on a global scale. The potential for discourse on this subject is, therefore, universal. The works of these five artists interconnect with each other to provide *SHOT* with the chance to explore the effects of modern society by creating images of specific places and presenting them as more ambiguous urban contexts. In doing so, the allegory of the greenhouse is used throughout the exhibition, symbolizing a microcosm of our global society.

Presenting a diptych comprising oil on wooden panels, Haroun Haward’s contribution is part of an ongoing series he is working on this year, part of an investigation into museum culture and archiving. “Ancient mythology speaks to both my love of storytelling as well as my interest in museum cultures and engaging with our shared histories,” he says. Exploring “art history, the history of man and how we reflect on our past by connecting with antiquity,” Haward has

been captivated by the “mnemonic resonance of objects from our collective histories,” spending time at the V&A and British Museum. “The sculptures, textiles, friezes and antiquities in these museums are able to enlighten and obfuscate and the same time,” he explains. “I am interested by that intellectual duality. They give us insights into the worlds of the ancients, but they also perpetuate the mysteries of what has gone before.” Expanding on this duality and tension, both panels of his diptych feature paintings of objects on plinths, which in turn are then filled in with patterns, motifs and designs from various sources, darkening silhouettes with tinted layers of linseed oil, trapping them, encasing them into “what almost feels like a painterly vitrine.”

Ingri Haraldsen presents a collage, but rather than using glue, she works with pencil, creating stark and imposing images of craggy mountains and rock formations. “For me, the human is not in the centre, yet there are always human traces to be found in my work,” she explains. “Nature has always played a huge part in my images, and one of the reasons I began working with rocks/ice and mountains was the freedom they gave me to really morph, and in a way, stitch the images together.” Inspired by a trip to the Seven Sisters – a series of mountains in her native Norway – Haraldsen was struck by the “feeling of being so small and unimportant compared to everything around me, and yet, at the same time, feeling so alive I just wanted to have more of that world.” Through these images, partially inspired by fellow artist Merlin Ramos, she relishes the playfulness of the composition – creating worlds from the known, morphing and rearranging to make new forms. “Ice, mountains and rocks are all in their own way the same when you draw them,” she muses. “They all become grey – you can almost never know their size, with nothing to compare them to. I’m always interested in images that don’t reveal everything at once, but have their own stories to tell.”

Fred Sorrell, on the other hand, uses torn posters from underground Tube platforms as the inspiration for his distinctive collage-like paintings, building on the history of the found materials to create a new, unique narrative. “The contrast of materials and natural decay on the surfaces you walk past each contain a unique visual history, which for me reflects our experience of the city because they are a shared memory,” he says. “There are times when I see a big blank advertising of construction board that commands such presence. They can contain such a unique, almost totemic quality that I want to immediately recreate it and add my own story to it.” This amalgamation of visual information sees Sorrell drawing and taking photographs around London, carefully constructing compositions directly from juxtapositions of objects, such as coloured tiles. For Sorrell, the physical act of painting itself is a free act, yet the result of careful planning. Like American painter Brice Marden’s ‘plane image’, faced with the dramatic works of Sorrell, we end up not looking at the subject matter of the painting, as one has come to expect, but rather, at the painting itself.

Meanwhile, Merlin Ramos’s works combine clean, geometric forms with organic swathes and slashes of paint, so that in places, the works on display have an almost Cubist element to them. “My work studies, and is referential to the classical techniques of painting, using the layering techniques, sketching and grounding of

landscape painters before me," he explains. From this starting point, Ramos observes the city around him, the abstracted forms taking on architectural elements. "Developments, building sites and change are the inspiration behind the drawings, whereas the colours in my work are a reference to my travels and admiration of artwork by Japanese artists such as Hiroshige and Hokusai," he says. "My architectural obsession comes from time working near the city of London, passing in buses gathering a framework, a visual diary for the coming weeks. Using cascading and fallen elements of our world in the work appeals to me, making a patchwork re-working of our world on the canvas which holds together a contrasting variety of interests I have."

For Louise Thomas, *The Artifice of Paradise*, a sequence of paintings from her *Resort* series, explores the meeting point of landscape, memory and architecture. Here, the artist explores abandoned amusement parks, a continuation of previous investigations into 1930s Italy, Victorian hospitals, American resorts and abandoned estates. While attempting to capture fleeting moments of experience, Thomas questions the architectural structures she finds within her political and historical contexts for them. Waterfalls, lazy rivers, and spas create an illusion of temporal tranquility upon backgrounds of modernist architecture sinking into Jurassic nostalgia. They convey the cosmopolitan dream of escape mixed with the uncanny as they critique the mechanical structures of contemporary tourism, leisure, and entertainment industries. Each painting's stillness touches on the threat of being forgotten, of a 'Paradise Lost', or rather, "as if paradise was lost on purpose, [yet] there is also the paradoxical myth of a new world that forgot its history and recreated prehistory brand new."

***SHOT* runs from 2nd – 31st August at ArtEco Gallery, London**

Information for journalists:

Haroun Haward

Born in London, Haroun Haward received his MFA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths University in 2010. Prior to this, he received his BA Hons. in Fine Art Painting from Brighton University in 2006. Between degrees, he received a Painting Department Scholarship Award from Nagoya University of Arts in Japan in 2005, followed by an artist residency at the National College of Art in Lahore, Pakistan in 2007. Haward has taken part in numerous exhibitions, including most recently the group show *manmadegod* at ArtEco | Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, as well as a solo show at Hermann Germann Contemporary, Zurich, both in 2012. Awards include the 2007 shortlist for the Celeste Painting Prize, as well as winning the Burt, Crill and Cardens Award for Outstanding Excellency (First Prize, 2006). For more information, visit www.artecogallery.com.

Ingri Haraldsen

Interested in the human relationship to nature and nature as mythology, Norwegian artist Ingri Haraldsen completed her Bachelor in Art and Design at the University College of Oslo in 2010 (including an exchange with the Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbao, Spain). Recent exhibitions include two 2012 shows with Petter Buhagen: *Mental Istid* at Babel Art Space, Trondheim, and *Face/No Face* at One Night Only, Oslo, as well as the solo exhibition *Tell me what to swallow* at Galleri Blunk, Trondheim. Haraldsen has participated in numerous group shows in locations such as New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berlin, Oslo, Toulouse and Eidsvoll. Her work can be found in public and private collections around Norway, Denmark and the USA. Awards include

consecutive scholarships from The Norwegian Art Council in 2012 and 2013 (BKV Grant), as well as the 2012 Norsk Illustrasjonsfond (The Norwegian Illustration Grant). For more information, visit www.ingriharaldsen.com.

Merlin Ramos

Born in Dundee, Merlin Ramos received his BA in Fine Art Painting from Falmouth College of Art, Cornwall (2007) and his MA in Drawing from the Prince's Drawing School (2010), followed by a residency at their studios in the Tea Building, Shoreditch, where he continued his studies. Recent exhibitions include the two-man show *Stop, Look, Listen* at Cob Gallery, Camden (2011), while he has participated in group exhibitions in places like London, Brighton, Northern Ireland and Falmouth, including an exhibition at Christie's London. His work can be found in the collection of HRH The Prince of Wales, among other international collections. For more information, visit www.merlinramos.wordpress.com.

Fred Sorrell

Born in London, where he continues to live and work, Fred Sorrell completed his BA in Fine Art at Falmouth College University in 2008, preceded by a Foundation Diploma in Art and Design at the same college. With residencies at The Florence Trust (2012) and Takt Residency Berlin (2009), solo exhibitions include the 2012 exhibition *Boswellia Carterii* at UK-based non-profit ACTE Arts. Group exhibitions include The Florence Trust Winter Open, London (2013), *Stop, Look, Listen*, alongside Merlin Ramos at the Cob Gallery, Camden (2011), as well as exhibitions at Shoreditch Town Hall, The Hub Gallery in Falmouth, and London's Golden Square with M&C Saatchi. Sorrell has been the recipient of awards from Glass Magazine (2013), The Jack and Ada Beattie Foundation (2011) and Daydream Network Magazine (2010). For more information, visit www.fredsorrell.com.

Louise Thomas

Currently living and working in Berlin, London-born Louise Thomas received her Bachelors Degree in Fine Art from the Falmouth School of Art in Cornwall, following on from a Diploma Foundation in Art and Design from Kingston University, London. In addition to receiving the 2007 Ferdynand Zweig Scholarship, which saw her travel to Italy, recent exhibitions include participation at Art Brussels with BISCHOFF/WEISS in 2009 and *One Can Often Be Thwarted By Some Antidiseestablishmentarianism*, at Primo Alonso, London. Shortlisted for the 2007 Celeste Painting Prize and the 2007 *4 New Sensations*, organized by Saatchi Gallery and Channel 4, Thomas was artist-in-residence at NES in Skagstrond, Iceland (2010), as well as The Florence Trust, St Saviours Church (2009-2010). Speaker participation includes visiting guest lecturer at Falmouth University (2010) as well as presentations at the Royal Academy and Serpentine Gallery, London. For more information, visit www.louisethomas.co.uk.

About ArtEco Gallery

The gallery is the conceptual brainchild of Kristin Hjellegjerde, serving as a creative outlet following the success of her art blog (ArtEco), established in 2010. After moving from New York to London, Hjellegjerde decided to establish the gallery in south west London in order to offer a fresh outlook for contemporary art in this part of the city. Based in Old York Road, the gallery seeks to showcase both emerging and established contemporary artists from a range of backgrounds in an intimate and personal environment. Previous exhibitions include the inaugural *After Munch*, as well as *manmadegod*, *Encounter*, *Chromatic*, *Four Seasons* and solo shows of artists such as Daniele Tamagni. For more information, visit www.artecogallery.com.

For further information and high-resolution images, please contact Kristin Hjellegjerde on khjellegjerde@mac.com.