

"Four Seasons"
WITH

EMER O'BRIEN
JULIETTE MAHIEUX BARTOLI
MATHEW TOM

PRIVATE VIEW 15th of January 2013
6:30 – 9:00PM

16th of January – 16th of February 2013

Imagine a table with no guests; plates and glasses in disarray, the only trace of clattering dishes and tinkling laughter evident in rumpled napkins and breadcrumbs strewn across used cutlery. There are faces, and they look down upon the scene, but they do not sit at the table, nor are they of the sitters of that table, but rather, faces of what might have been, of imagined guests in the mind's eye of the creator. Exploring notions of changeability, transience and the sublime, ArtEco Gallery, London, is proud to present its new group exhibition *Four Seasons*, featuring works by Emer O'Brien, Juliette Mahieux Bartoli and Mathew Tom.

Dublin-born Emer O'Brien's *The Four Seasons* consists of a series of photographs depicting the passing of time. Inspired by the Dutch Masters still life paintings after a trip to Amsterdam in 2011 as well as Gabriel Axil's *Babette's Feast*, the work combines O'Brien's interests in installation and performance. O'Brien has staged a series of indulgent meals, hosted at a long trestle table in her studio. With the walls blacked out, these gatherings have an intimate atmosphere, and, with the revellers gone, leave the empty table and dregs of food and drink nestled in this dark, quiet space. O'Brien then documents these settings. The De Walvisch Cultureship commissioned the first such image in the series the *De Walvisch Soup Salon, Dec 2011*," she explains. "I have been attending the Salon dinners of artist friends Zatorski & Zatorski since 2007, and in December 2011 was asked by them to make portraits of the Salon Members. Rather than turn my camera upon the individual members I proposed photographing their place settings at the table set out like a Dutch 17th-century still life that one eats for the inaugural Salon on the Walvisch Cultureship. I had for some time longed to photograph a table with these smaller intimate and original details absorbed into a larger conciliation while alluding to things and conversations now passed. "In this sense, O'Brien's photographs become portraits of times and people at once absent and present – their mark left, like fingerprints, in the evidence of what once was. Here, in twelve analogue negatives carefully stitched together, *The Four Seasons* is presented to the viewer as a landscape of sorts, or rather, a tablescape.

For Franco-Italian artist Juliette Mahieux Bartoli, *Four Seasons* is as much a modern theme as it is a classical one. "Our perception of time is a fascinating subject because

it is a vital factor in our perception of reality," she muses. Presenting a four-part series of oil paintings, Mahieux Bartoli explores one woman in four different poses, each angle representing the embodiment of the four seasons, creating an annual cycle. "In this way I explore the understanding of the four seasons as four finite segments of an infinite cycle," she explains. The pose of the woman is frozen, statuesque, yet indicating imminent movement – for Mahieux Bartoli, this mirrors the way in which each season exists for only a limited amount of time, destined to end, just as it is to return. "The nature of the seasons is to mutate one into the next, like stills in a rolling film, set to repeat ad infinitum, momentarily static and yet part of a greater sequence."

Mathew Tom, on the other hand, presents charcoal and gauche on paper works, *Guru II*, exploring his interest in the juxtaposition between spirituality and materialism. "After a period of time living in India, I questioned my desire and need to believe in something," he explains. "However, I could not find what I was looking for, but instead realised that the search was what I was really after." Finding inspiration in the Portuguese word Saudade, the vague and constant desire for something that does not, and probably cannot, exist, Tom created his Guru. "He represents questions of power, wealth, religious, the real and the imaginary and the cloudiness between them," he explains.

The works of these three artists create an intriguing interplay in the explorations and investigations of the four seasons – what they share is the portrayal, not of what is evident, but what is not evident – a table of food that has been eaten, ravished, finished, and the evidence of people who are not there, transient like the seasons themselves, ever changing, ever in flux, desiring what is at once attainable and unattainable, forever at the crux of what TS Eliot called 'the still point of the turning world – neither from nor towards, neither flesh nor fleshless'. For there, he would have told us, at the still point, 'there the dance is'.

***Four Seasons* runs from 16th of January – 15th of February 2013
at ArtEco Gallery, London**

Information for journalists:

Emer O'Brien

Emer O'Brien was born in Dublin and raised in Toronto. Since 1998 she has lived and worked from her studio in central London. An installation artist with a background in photography, she is best known for large-scale installations that chart the intersection of technology and science with the natural and supernatural, while her photographic work charts the passing of time through absence, memory and loss. O'Brien studied at The London Institute: LCF from 1999 to 2002, Goldsmiths College from 2002 to 2003, and The London Consortium from 2006 to 2008. Between 2008 and 2011 she was Turner Prize Nominee Catherine Yass's first assistant. Since then her work has been included in numerous solo and group exhibitions at key London institutions including The Wapping Project (2009, 2010 and 2012), The Royal Academy (2008) and The Whitechapel Gallery (2004), as well as national European institutions such as Kunsthall KaDe, Amersfoort, Netherlands (2009), Narondi Galerie V Praze (2005), The Dutch Textile Museum (2003) and, most recently, at Art Platform LA 2012 as part of the Co/Lab presentations.

O'Brien is currently represented by Christian Ferreira @ The Wapping Project. For more information visit www.emerobrien.com.

Juliette Mahieux Bartoli

Juliette Mahieux Bartoli is a Franco-Italian artist born in the United States. She grew up between Washington DC, Paris, Geneva, and Rome. Mahieux Bartoli completed a Drawing and Painting certificate at the Spinelli Art and Restoration Institute in Florence, and graduated with a BA in History of Art from the University of Cambridge. She attended classes at the Prince's Drawing School, from where she went on to complete an MA in Fine Art at City & Guilds of London Art School. Mahieux Bartoli currently lives and works between London and Rome. For more information visit www.juliettemahieuxbartoli.com.

Mathew Tom

Born in Florida, USA, Mathew Tom received his MFA Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London (2011), Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2008), and BFA Painting at the University of Central Florida (2007). He had a solo show and residency in the Netherlands titled *Perfect Future* (2012) and solo exhibition *Welcome to Paradise* at the Hoxton Gallery, London. Selected Group shows include The Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London, (2012), *Wunderkammer*, Hoxton Art Gallery, London (2012); *Grammar of the Ornament*, Hoxton Art Gallery, London (2011), *Gen Next III*, Aakriti Art Gallery, Kolkata, India (2008), *Lucky 13*, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago (2007) and *Paper Love*, Dan Devening Projects, Chicago (2007). Tom lives and works in London. For more information visit www.mathewtom.com.

ArtEco Gallery

ArtEco Gallery is the conceptual brainchild of Kristin Hjellegjerde, serving as a creative outlet following the success of her art blog of the same name, 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* and *Encounter*. For more information, visit www.artecogallery.com.

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