

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Painters of Modern Life**

**Dan Burkhart, E'wao Kagoshima, Jakub Julian Ziolkowski, Juanita McNeely**

**April 17–May 24, 2014**

**Opening reception Thursday April 17, 6–9 PM**

*"Modernity" signifies the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art of which the other half is the eternal and the immutable.*

Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, 1859

When Charles Baudelaire finally published *The Painter of Modern Life* in 1863 modernity was still an idea in formation. Arising from the hotbed of Romanticism, modernity, Baudelaire posited, put the imagination at the service of synchronous observation and social critique. With this insight *The Painter of Modern Life* became the seminal document of modern aesthetic criticism.

The artist Baudelaire anointed as the painter of modern life was Constantin Guys. From a contemporary perspective, Guys is an unexpected choice. Baudelaire saw this artist as a flâneur, a stroller walking the streets of Paris, taking the fashionable women and prostitutes of the day as the subject of his illustrational watercolors. Today, it is solely in terms of its subject matter rather than its style that Guys' art appears modern.

Likewise, Dan Burkhart, E'wao Kagoshima, Juanita McNeely and Jakub Julian Ziolkowsky may not look like modern painters, but they are painters of modern life. Flâneurs of their imagination, depicting in Baudelaire's terms, the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent; these artists conjure modernity by reverie not style, and are modern not by design but by default.

Dan Burkhart's visionary painting is a major body of contemporary work that is little known. Although he showed with Rosamund Felsen in Los Angeles in the early 1980s and received significant press and collector interest, after moving to New York Burkhart's independence and rigor confounded art world context. Yet his painting resides within the literary anti-transcendentalist context of American romantic and symbolist art that arose from Edgar Allen Poe and received illumination by painters as diverse as Washington Allston, John Quidor and Albert Pinkham Ryder. Poe's sensibility proved instrumental to Baudelaire and his contemporaries and Dan Burkhart gives this radical tradition an ecstatic and original modern presence. Dan Burkhart was born in Fargo, North Dakota (1952) and lives and works in Moravia, New York.

Born in 1945 in Niigata, Japan where his parents had moved to escape American bombing, E'wao Kagoshima is one of a lost generation of Japanese artists, younger than those of the Gutai, but significantly older than the generation represented by Takashi Murakami. Kagoshima's art takes a unique position in the post-War arc of Japanese culture in assimilating Western influences, responding to the sociopolitical fallout from the Second



World War and fabricating an exotic and ritualized visual culture drawing upon Oriental tradition and décor, pop culture, violence, eroticism and kitsch.

After moving to New York in 1976 Kagoshima's art quickly gained attention, becoming a touchstone in a widely read series of Arts Magazine articles by Nicholas Moufarrege documenting the burgeoning East Village scene. In 1983 Kagoshima had a solo exhibition at The New Museum, where he transformed the museum's space into his studio, working there throughout the course of his show. E'wao Kagoshima lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Juanita McNeely's hauntingly savage figurative painting is central to the first generation of feminist art. Her work is also almost entirely unknown outside a small circle of contemporaries (including Judith Bernstein, Joan Semmel, and Anita Steckel who were, in the early 1970s, the collective subject of a New York Magazine feature on wayward feminists). When the Mitchell Alpus Gallery did an exhibition of her work 2006, it was the first time McNeely's paintings had been seen in New York in twenty-six years. Unfortunately, for a woman of her generation this cryptic exile makes sense. Her paintings are passionate, strange, and beautiful. McNeely recognizes that her work is "difficult to look at, much less deal with. These subjects continue to be the focus of my 'still lives'—life, death, birth, pain and women's struggles...my experiences."

Juanita McNeely was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1936. In college she studied with Allan Kaprow, who became a significant advocate of her independent voice. In the 1970s McNeely showed with several of SoHo's early cooperative galleries. Juanita McNeely continues to live and work in New York.

Jakub Julian Ziolkowski creates hallucinatory worlds that are inhabited by strange and dynamic forms that recall the language of the outsider surrealists such as Henri Rousseau. Vibrant and perverse, anthropomorphic and surreal, Ziolkowski's private language is the symbolic expression of a highly concerted imagination that also was shaped by life in a very small town: Zamosc, where the artist was born in 1980.

Ziolkowski trained at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts, Faculty for Painting and Drawing, Krakow. The Hauser and Wirth Gallery, with whom he has had five exhibitions since 2006, represent the artist. He was recently included in the Venice Biennale 55<sup>th</sup> International Art Exhibition at the as part of *The Encyclopedic Palace*, curated by Massimiliano Gioni. Jakub Julian Ziolkowski lives and works in Krakow.

Mitchell Alpus opened his gallery in New York in 1992. He gained recognition for exhibiting little-known historical work aimed at a contemporary audience of artists and writers. The gallery opened with an exhibition of Harold Stevenson's New Adam, a forty-foot long reclining portrait of Sal Mineo made in 1962 for "Six Painters and the Object", Lawrence Alloway's pioneering Pop Art exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum. Yet upon seeing the completed painting Alloway demurred, saying that its inclusion would distract viewers from the other artists in the show.

Since opening, the gallery has reintroduced work by Robert Mallary, Lee Lozano, Judith Bernstein, Boyd Rice, Martha Wilson, Jack Smith and Bill Bollinger, among many others. Mitchell Alpus in association with Alpus Greenspon, has continued to include emerging work, often in the context of group exhibitions, in an active exhibition schedule.

If you have any questions please contact:

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