

## **EXTREME PAINTING**

**June 19 - August 31, 2013**

**Adam Bergeron**  
**Jean-Philippe Harvey**  
**Sean Montgomery**  
**Manuel Ocampo**  
**Jayson Oliveria**

Laroche/Joncas Gallery is pleased to present Extreme Painting II, a city-wide exhibition of current painting including new work from five contemporary painters—Sean Montgomery, Jayson Oliveria, Jean-Philippe Harvey, Adam Bergeron, and Manuel Ocampo – that collectively pushes the boundaries of the medium itself.

Now in its second incarnation Extreme Painting has been an initiative from the Association des Galeries d'art Contemporain,(AGAC) here in Montréal. The multiplicity of the exhibition venues both reflects and fuels the marked resurgence of contemporary painting in Canada and internationally in the last few years. Montreal is a particularly germane site for such investigations, as it conveys its own rich history of avant-garde painters such as Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Claude Tousignant and Yves Gaucher, among many others. In the intervening decades, moreover, there have been plenty of laments over the end of painting. Indeed today's work contends with modernist art history, more recent claims of the end of both art and history, as well as the impact of the digital present on visual art.

The works on display at Laroche/Joncas belong to this emergent force in painting for which an excess of both materials and bodily gesture, a crudeness of fashioning and a punk-like provisionality signal a rebellion against the cool distance and careful precision of both the modernist tradition and the current hegemony of Photoshop in image production. This work is resolutely and energetically hand-made and also conceptual. It self-reflexively absorbs and spins the historical cycles of painting, demonstrating in the process that the medium is very much alive and moving in new directions. This exhibition, like the larger project that encompasses it, is an exciting opportunity to take a barometric reading of painting now, and perhaps glean an idea of which directions this seachange might take.

Edmonton-born Sean Montgomery earned his MFA at Concordia University and is now based in Ithaca, New York. With a deft and often humorous deployment of abstraction and all that attends it—artistic hierarchies, the conceits of modernist purity, even ideas of masculinity—his work remains purposefully imperfect, provisional and imaginative. His “plaid” paintings, for example, perform the double function of satirizing the modernist grid, evoking a rich and cherished trope of Canadiana (itself in turn a nod to our colonial past), which is tied together by plaid's connotations of masculinity.

Jayson Oliveria, who lives and works in Manila, gives us *Again* (2011), which is comprised of 100 small paintings hung in a grid-like pattern. Each represents a style or movement in modern and post-modern painting and bears the inscription “again.” In contrast to the deconstructionist

nihilism that often colours such a direct acknowledgment of painting's repetitions, Oliveria has created a visual archive or inventory of them. Therefore, instead of nullifying painting's history (and future), he has democratically reduced each representative to the same small size and assigned each to its own spot on the wall and in history.

The work of Quebec-based Jean-Philippe Harvey demonstrates a strong affiliation with a punk ethos that seeks to push painting to its limit of legibility as such. His work is fast, gestural and deliberately un-beautiful—in stark, ironic contrast to the images he culls from popular culture, such as the instantly-recognizable face of Kate Moss, for example. Harvey's large canvas, made while in Brooklyn in 2012, hovers precariously between figuration and chaos. The energy and speed are almost palpable, and they bring us as far from a grid painting as one can be within the parameters of a canvas.

A studio mate and frequent collaborator of Harvey, Adam Bergeron's work reflects a shared location within youth and street culture. While he playfully mixes media including spray paint and collage he is also a practicing recipient of the history of the monochrome and plays with the history of the monochrome and hard-edged abstraction.

Based in Marikina City, Philippines, Manuel Ocampo's work has been internationally recognized for over twenty years. Cognizant of, yet not beholden to, the traditions of art, Ocampo's work oscillates between history and invention, between abstraction and figuration, between sanctifying painting and defiling it. His highly textured oil paintings evoke dreamlike and fantastical landscapes; his works on paper are looser and layered, defying control and precision with each fast stroke.

The work of Extreme Painting operates from the understanding that painting is perennial but must be roughed up at times in order to maintain its vitality. This painting pushes concept, materials and frame to the outer edges of what painting can be, for now.

Nathalie Zayne

We would like to thank Galerie Zimmermann-Kratochwill, Graz, Austria for the presentation of the works of Manuel Ocampo and Jayson Oliveria