

LAROCHE/JONCAS

410-372 Ste-Catherine O. Montréal Qc.

Christian Messier *La Forêt s'en vient II* June 7 - July 1 2017.

Galerie Laroche/Joncas is pleased to present the uncensored version of *La Forêt s'en vient II* and exhibition of paintings from Montreal based artist Christian Messier. This is the third solo exhibition by the artist with the gallery. This exhibition follows the recent censorship of six paintings by the artist in the lobby of the salle André-Mathieu this past March that lead to the cancellation of the exhibition *La Forêt s'en vient*. The censorship of the exhibition attracted the attention of most mass medias in Montreal including television, radio and the newspapers at the time. The artist was quoted in newspapers, appeared on Television and on radio to address questions about censorship and the exhibition that was censored. The incident became an opportunity also to address many questions regarding the relationship between contemporary visual arts and its reception by the different kinds of public and to examine the lack of interest and space devoted to contemporary visual arts in mass media in general. Obviously, the question of freedom of expression is also a major issue, especially in this period of our history. It is primordial to preserve this freedom that each case of censorship threatens. It's in this context that the exhibition will be again presented at the gallery. A round table discussion will also take place at the gallery on Saturday June 17 at 4:30 pm where these questions will be further explored and discussed.

"This body of work consists of pictorial works that explore the idea of the grotesque and of strangeness. The "Forest" that is referred to in the title is in opposition with the notion of the landscape as unnatural, the wild nature organized by humans to become comfortable and unthreatening. The Forest seen from the interior is the contrary of comfort; it becomes the premonition of a latent threat. It gives the impression that the edge of the forest advances when our back is turned. At the heart of it, people behave in strange ways. Neither aggressive nor courteous they offer themselves in such an incongruous fashion that there is no hope for comprehension for their behaviour. We must accept that we are vulnerable and abandon the hope of controlling meaning, then only the psychology of the actor in these works and their interrelation with the color from which they are composed reveal themselves and can be appreciated. It's in this spirit, the difficulty of interpretation, that this series has come into existence." Christian Messier

Most of the mise en scène in the paintings originated from the internet and from stills from videos on *Youtube* and their juxtaposition of much like that of a collage. The goal being to create situations that are coherent visually but whose meaning becomes incongruous. This breaking down of logic is only an abstract organisation of meaning that sees itself enhanced by the chromatic qualities of painting as well as with the non-verbal expression of the characters that act, according to the artist, directly on the empathy of the spectator.

BIOGRAPHY

-Born in Québec City, Christian Messier lives and works in Montreal since 2012.

-As a performance artist, Christian Messier has presented his performances in fifteen countries as well as in many events in Canada including *Rencontre internationale d'art performance* (Québec), *C'est arrivé près de chez vous* at Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, the *Manif' d'art 3 – La Biennale de Québec* in 2005, La Biennale d'art performatif de Rouyn-Noranda, 7a 11dToronto, Live Biennale, Vancouver, VIVA! Art Action in Montréal and recently at CIRCA Art actuel, Montréal April 2017.

-Messier's paintings have been presented at l'Œil de Poisson, Québec, Galerie L'Œuvre de l'autre, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Centre CLARK in Montréal, Est-Nord-Est in Saint-Jean-Port-Joli, Qc as well as Papier 16 and 17 in Montréal.

Christian Messier also teaches visual arts at the Cégep Édouard-Montpetit since 2012. He is the founder of *Punctum art visuels* a web magazine that promotes visual arts in Québec, active from 2009 to 2014. Messier also initiated *Pan Peinture* (Off Symposium de Baie-Saint-Paul) in Québec City and organised *Stew*, a performance evening at Bar Éphémère in Québec City.

Christian Messier has curated the group exhibition *Geist, La présence représentée* (*Geist : The human presence represented*) that closed on June 3rd at Galerie Laroche/Joncas.

He recently published an essay exploring the notion of risk in *Inter art* actuel magazine. He will also publish a novel titled *La Forêt s'en vient*.

The artist is presently completing a Doctorate in practice and studies of the arts at UQÀM in Montréal. Christian Messier is represented by Galerie Laroche/Joncas.

Round-Table Discussion : Saturday, June 17, 4:30

An initiative by Christian Messier and Emmanuel Galland

Theme: Why does censorship work with the pretext of sparing the public and why is mass media so uninterested in contemporary visual arts?

In conjunction with the issues raised around the censorship related to the body of work *La Forêt s'en vient II* presented at Galerie Laroche/Joncas, the public is invited to a discussion exploring questions of the marginalization of contemporary art.

Questions around censorship and freedom of expression will also be explored in the context of diffusing art outside the regular networks of presentation along with the almost inexistent relationship between the visual arts milieu and mass media.

Invited guests will share their views on these questions and an open discussion will follow.