

JASON MEADOWS

February 10 - March 19, 2011

Gallery Two

for immediate release

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present its fifth solo exhibition of work by Jason Meadows. Meadows creates three-dimensional representations of different real and imagined figures inspired by a range of sources: literary, art historical, pop cultural, and even mathematical. In some, Meadows employs images of fictional personalities (Uncle Sam, Richie Rich, the Monopoly Man, etc.) as metaphors to describe cultural and social situations. The presentation includes a menagerie of characters - fashioned out of rough industrial wood, paint, and metal - whose fabrication undermines their sources and recontextualizes the forms to provoke new meanings. While his work does reference art history, modernism, and philosophies of the past, Meadows' approach remains broadly pluralistic. Rather than exclusively mining modernist art forms, Meadows is committed to a multifarious artistic investigation that translates into intelligent, rigorously developed, and sometimes humorously nuanced work.

In two works, *Holly Golightly* and *Face Case*, Meadows draws from Truman Capote's famous novella *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. Like the story's heroine, *Holly Golightly* exudes a capricious air and is likewise fashioned to imply movement. The artist's conservative application of basic colors and shapes successfully evokes both a specific imaginary person, as well as the spontaneous, light-hearted attitude that this character has come to epitomize. Further, he transforms simple patterns into the Chanel suit, leopard handbag and flirty earrings of the young socialite. In another nod to Capote, and in keeping with a carnivalesque atmosphere, *Face Case* employs abstract and multi-colored shapes to suggest a jam-packed party in a tiny New York apartment.

The artist continues his celebration of American culture by bringing to life a trio of teddy bears - generic icons of all things cute and cuddly - with a sinister twist. In this and other works, he applies minimal representational gestures within an abstract format to indicate fictional characters, both general (teddy bears) and specific (Snoopy, Charlie Brown) in three dimensions. In some works, Meadows employs cartoonish images of these fictional personalities from pop culture to convey socio-political commentary. For example, in *Do Not Pass Go*, we find the figure of Richie Rich, representing the nouveau riche bourgeoisie, overcoming the landed gentry in the form of the monocled Monopoly Man.

The unorthodox wall-mounted sculpture *Acid Test Equation* investigates the paradox of the American dream while exploring the relationship between old and new. Old-fashioned wrought iron signage displays a small contemporary flag of Uncle Sam, the recognizable figure who embodies both the pioneer spirit as well as the threat of Orwellian autocracy. In this work, Meadows explores the American urge to pioneer and explore unknown landscapes, both external and internal, but all under the watchful eye of "Big Brother."

Several works exhibit fewer literal references and rely more on the artist's improvised abstraction. In *Weekend Project*, Meadows alludes to masculinity with forms based on a Mustang engine. Unctuous, blackened metal rests on an aluminum plate as rods penetrate the work's wooden base. Here, low-tech materials are transformed into elegant, unidentifiable, yet vaguely familiar designs. In *The Conversation*, dark-stained wood and would-be furniture parts are tied together with rope, evoking an imaginary S&M contraption. Under closer inspection, the silhouette of two figures locked in conversation reveals itself, as a two-dimensional "word bubble" links the interlocutors. Here and throughout the exhibition, Meadows presents works that hover at the border between abstraction and representation.

Meadows' work is currently on view at the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX, as part of the exhibition *Alexander Calder and Contemporary Art: Form, Balance, Joy*. This exhibition originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago and will travel to the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA (April - September 2011) and the Nasher Museum, Duke University (February - June 2012). A catalog was published in conjunction with that exhibition.

For any further information, please feel free to contact the gallery at mail@tanyabonakdargallery.com or 212-414-4144.