

Galerie Poller

PRESS RELEASE

Chris Newman

STAND-IN DEVELOPMENTS

Paintings and Video

October 23, 7pm
BIG STIFF UNIT I with NILREB
Performance - Video with life text

October 23 – extended to December 9, 2009
Opening Reception Friday October 23, 6 – 9 pm
526 Canal Street (at Washington Street)
New York, NY 10013



Galerie Poller New York is pleased to announce the opening of STAND-IN DEVELOPMENTS, Chris Newman's first solo exhibition in New York.

"The paintings involved in this exhibition are plotted, i.e. the points at which their lines join are calculated by number series derived from earlier personal working methods (a personalised form of logic), but these points are then joined freehand to gain a tension between the precise and the 'wobbly' – (the human) – element. This brings about a kind of 'thinginess' in the created forms and their placement without specific reference to known things, taking the work away from the abstract; this is underlined by the painterly rather than flat style of paint application."

Chris Newman

For Chris Newman

Now that contemporary art seems to have disintegrated into the sentimental surfeit of ideas with no substance whatsoever and a retrospective re-hashing, here, once again and unexpectedly, a figure emerges who does in fact succeed in finding a new way of formulating the question of matter, meaning essence, or indeed substance. Chris Newman definitely does not work outside history, as the question of matter is also always a question to history, whose selection passes down to us those things whose matter endures. When Newman as a composer refers for example to Beethoven and as a painter and drawer to Ibsen, then he does so because he is convinced by the matter. Fleshing out Ibsen's text from Ghosts with his own diary entries, or transforming it into painting and drawing is nothing other than exposing the pure matter as if it were a seam of gold or an electric current and like an injection filling it into something else. Nobody will set out to understand Newman's images as being fueled by Ibsen's text, as the intention is

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526 Canal Street
New York, NY 10013
USA
c/o Pablo's Birthday

Phone +1 (212) 462-2411
Cell Jimi Billingsley - director (917) 450-5354
mail-nyc@galerie-poller.com
www.galerie-poller.com

Tue - Fri 11am - 6pm
Sat 12 – 6 pm and by appointment

Galerie Poller, Inc.

Co-operation with
Galerie Poller
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Frankfurt am Main

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Chris Newman
STAND-IN DEVELOPMENT

PRESS RELEASE - Continued

not to treat the matter as equality of images, as identity in the intellectual sense or as an illustrative notion, but as involving a kind of life current being transposed onto the ungrounded canvas. This transposition is undertaken in as primitive manner, with such a carefree mind as possible. Here, primitive is construed as a state that has freed itself of all speculation and tactical, calculating form, and no longer even wishes to entail composition. The actual reversion to an in this sense primitive identity with itself and the matter resembles a process of purgation that eliminates the over-burdening of the matter with meaning taken by Modernism to the point where matter became unrecognizable. Here, a hitherto unknown path to the new beginning so urgently needed has indeed been taken. This world, which pays homage to surfeit and seeks inflation wherever it can, does not tolerate pure matter. It instinctively has to hang the matter with poorly fitting clothes in order to re-attain its purported freedom, and calls the result individuality. Cultural conventions or ideologies that imbue everything with meaning, translate it into language and digest it (which essentially means trying to devalue and destroy it) are powerless in the face of pure matter. Newman has succeeded in generating this powerlessness as a state prior to art – in a world that fears precisely that most. Pure matter, identical with itself and meaning nothing other than itself, is fundamentally nothing other than happiness or what we call the soul or god. Identity is not the same as the individuality that we believe contains freedom. Newman is a person with a strong streak of individuality that has penetrated the identity of the matter, be it in painting, in drawing, in music, in film, or writing, talking and singing. He has reunited what we call personality with infinity. Only on that basis is art possible.

Eugen Blume
Direktor Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin
Oktober 2009

Please direct inquiries for further information to
Thomas Poller
mail-nyc@galerie-poller.com
+1-347-751-4455

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