

Matt Saunders

A Step Away From Them

March 13 - May 10, 2014

Opening Wednesday 12 March, 6 to 8pm

PARIS, FEBRUARY 28, 2014 - Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present *A Step Away from Them*, the first exhibition of colour photographs and a new moving image installation by Matt Saunders. This is the second exhibition by Matt Saunders at the Paris gallery. On the porous boundaries between painting and photography, Matt Saunders' work is about moving from one form into another – a kind of translation.

Paintings at heart, the unique photographic prints are produced without a camera, instead using materials like oil paint, ink, linen or mylar to produce « negatives » for exposing analogue c-prints. Saunders paints the opposite of the end result, trying to imagine what the negative of an image must look like, then he places the painting on a piece of photo paper and passes light through to make an exposure. This singular process and the materials Saunders uses are inseparable to the final work. If the materials are similar, the *modus operandi* is unique for each print.



Matt Saunders is engaged with the vast trove of past images captured on film as a way to consider how pictures exist with history, how representations telegraph back to other times, and how they can be circulated and reapprehended.

Several portraits in the exhibition refer directly to the actress Rose Hobart and were inspired by the eponymous work of American artist Joseph Cornell. His 1936 film collage cut up a black and white print of the B-movie *East of Borneo*, recasting it at a prolonged scrutiny of the lead actress and transforming it by projecting through colored glass. Saunders returns to Cornell's original source, colorizing it himself, as both homage and an alternative path.

Saunders is particularly attracted to the unusual lives of actors and actresses and the ebbs and flows of their careers. While making images of somehow-mediated landscapes or portraits of half-forgotten figures, Saunders' intention is to give a new meaning to their traditional iconography. The viewer is confronted with a dual feeling of distance and proximity. The artist not only attempts to reconnect to the aura of those figures of the big screen but each one of those portraits appears to be "*the unique appearance of a distance, however close it may be*" in the words of Walter Benjamin. As Saunders described it in a recent interview: "*There's a real index to their lives and their times but the photographs are here in the present. I hope they feel unstable, speculative, and immediate.*"

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The artist will also show a new, multi-channel video installation entitled *Reverdy/King Hu*. Both figurative and abstract at the same time, the film refers to two types of "spaces": the surreal and poetic space of Pierre Reverdy and the strange space born from the vision of the Chinese martial arts film director King Hu, whose acrobatic editing and quick cutting actors turn over the laws of gravity.

In this new film, like in his photographic prints, Matt Saunders focuses on moving from one medium to another; he first paints or draws the images with various materials which he afterwards imports with a scanner. It is a nuanced meeting of the physical and digital, moving thoughts about medium and materiality in painting over into moving image. *Reverdy/King Hu* is about giving the spectator a visual experience. It weds thoughts of structure with flashes of image and association.

Its poetic reference is mirrored in the title of the exhibition itself: *A Step Away From Them*, refers to the poem by Frank O'Hara often considered as cinematic, which accentuates the link between cinema and poetry.

Matt Saunders was born in 1975 in Tacoma (Washington, United States) and lives in Berlin. He has studied at Harvard and Yale. The Renaissance Society of Chicago organized a solo exhibition of his work in 2010 and Tate Liverpool in 2012. Matt Saunders received the Prix d'art contemporain Jean-François Prat in 2013.

His recent group exhibitions include : *Cinema & Painting*, Adam art Center, Wellington (until 11th May 2014), *Test Pattern*, Whitney Museum, New York (2013), *Plot for a Biennial*, 10th Biennale de Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2011), *The Anxiety of Photography*, Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (2011), *The more things change*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2010-2011), *Untitled (History Painting)*, University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor (2009), *Freeway Balconies*, Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin (2008).

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captions :

- *Back (Kitty Winn) #1, version 1*, 2014
C-print on Kodak Endura Premier matte paper, 127 x 105 cm»
- *Borneo (Rose Hobart) #4, version 3*, 2014
C-print on Kodak Endura Premier matte paper, 126,8 x 104,5 cm

concurrently at the gallery :

Screening of the film by Adrián Villar Rojas
« *Lo que el Fuego me trajo* », 2013, video, color, 32 mn
March 25 - April 19, 2014, from 11am to 7pm

upcoming exhibition :

Oscar Murillo
We Don't Work Sundays
May 23 - August 4, 2014