

Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release



left to right: John Finneran, "Untitled Night (with Three Eyes, One Mouth)", 2009;
Leeza Meksin, "MKRS", 2009; Christopher Quirk, "The Age of Reason", 2006

John Finneran • Leeza Meksin • Christopher Quirk

September 17 – October 31, 2009

Opening: Thursday, September 17, 6-8:30 pm

Thomas Erben Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition that brings together three New York-based painters whose work engages a dialogue between material, conceptual and technical aspects of painting. Using complex surfaces, quasi-iconic images and diverse materials, these artists create works that are evocative and engaging, both physically and intellectually.

Employing a deliberative process of painting and erasure on aluminum surfaces, **John Finneran** creates works that contrast a muted sheen with stark rendering and seemingly slapdash facture. His vocabulary of lips, trash cans, eyes, clouds and other simplified objects present a sly pictorial syntax that make the viewer oscillate between bemusement and painterly sincerity.

Finneran (b. 1979, New York, NY) received his MFA from Bard College and BFA from the Cooper Union. Most recently, his work was included in exhibitions at Gavin Brown's and Taxter and Spengemann, both New York. In 2003 and 2006, he had solo exhibitions at Rivington Arts and in 2008 with Upstairs Berlin.

Leeza Meksin's paintings evolve from a complex technique of fusing acrylic polymers with spandex that provides a hybrid surface for the application of oil paint. The imagery, usurped from instructional signage, advertising and design vocabularies, presents the possibility of an enigmatic message or mystical inference while the materiality of her work evokes the mind and body relationship.

Meksin (b. 1977, Moscow, Russia) acquired a BA and MA in Comparative Literature, University of Chicago, and a MFA in Painting from Yale. She is the co-recipient of a 2009 Soros Foundation grant for her documentary film work. Her work has been part of numerous exhibitions including in New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. One of her forthcoming solo shows, *Dressed-up*, will be at Washington State University, St. Louis, MO. She is a faculty member at Tyler School of Art.

Using oil and acrylic, **Christopher Quirk** builds up heavily textured, ambiguous elements that inhabit silvery expanses of an uncertain depth. These constituent parts, while puzzling in their relationships, nevertheless exist in a fully resolved painterly space. Though the works often reflect stillness and restraint, strong visceral impact and visual generosity are important considerations.

Quirk (b. 1961, Rockville Centre, NY) attended the Tyler School of Art for his MFA and also received a MA in Liberal Education from St. Johns College, Santa Fe, NM. He has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad, including a number of solo presentations, since 1990.

Viewed together, the works in the exhibition continue to extend the language of painting and explore the fertile spaces at the intersection of visual, physical and intellectual spheres.

Gallery hours: Tue-Sat, 10-6. For further information and visuals, please visit www.thomaserben.com or contact the gallery.

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