

Thomas Erben Gallery

Press Release



Harold Camping - false Prophet, 2010. Oil on canvas, 76 x 96 in.

"Misshapen Chaos of Well-seeming Forms!"
Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, Act I

Shanna Waddell

February 17 – March 19, 2011

Opening Reception: Thursday, February 17, 6-8:30 pm

Thomas Erben is pleased to present the first solo show of American painter Shanna Waddell (b. 1981, Long Beach, CA; lives and works in Philadelphia). "Misshapen Chaos of Well-seeming Forms" titles a group of new paintings the artist created after receiving her MFA from Tyler School of Art, May 2010.

Playing impasto against splattered veils and contrasting urban colors with a new age palette, these works distort material flatness into a warped spatiality and combine figuration with abstract symbols and uninhibited brushwork, holding together a spectrum of sensibilities that precipitates early American modernism into an apocalyptic, prophetic hyperbole and personal vision.

Woman peering into Atomic Nuclear Illusionistic Space portrays a female figure, tube socked, with goggles and dressed in a period costume in the midst of a brushy, post nuclear air. Rectangular boxes, coffins in the artist's iconography, fall out of a pink, atmospheric sky whose expanse is made visible through volumetric lines. The geometry is redeemed by a continuously looping, floating shape while anchored by muddy coloration and wide variations in brushwork which is the very ground the solitary woman stands upon.

Harold Camping - false Prophet presents to us a half figure with a hollowed-out face, on-stage, behind a see-through pulpit, flanked by curtains and cheerfully colored balloons. His rib cage, intestines and

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pelvic bone, rendered as a loosely brushed organic mulch, pushes figuration into a partially ornamental abstraction. The subject of the religious leader – Titian’s half-veiled Pope in the Philadelphia Museum of Art served as a historical reference for Waddell, as it was Velazquez’s pope for Bacon - is presented here, uncovered and in its undisguised manifestation.

One of the most recently completed works, *Transcient Exit*, is part of a series that houses abstraction within references to domestic space such as the bath room with its tub, medicine cabinet, faucet and mini blinds. Waddell likens these fixtures to conduits for transcient experiences, which she renders through hyper-saturated color and mobilizing brushwork - placeholders for encompassing mental states.

Gallery hours: Tue-Sat, 10-6.

For further information and visuals, please visit www.thomaserben.com or contact the gallery at 212-645.8701.

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