

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tom Burckhardt: Cast Paintings
January 2–February 15, 2014
Reception: Thursday, January 9, 5-7:30PM
Gallery Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00-5:30 PM
Email: info@gregorylindgallery.com

Gregory Lind Gallery is pleased to present a new series of paintings by New York-based artist Tom Burckhardt. This new series is a continuation of artistic concerns first addressed by Burckhardt in his 2007-08 series *Slump*, where he fabricated canvases out of cardboard and plastic resin. In his *Cast Paintings*, he casts a “canvas,” as well as its supports, in plastic, including the stretcher bars on the back of the piece. However, before revealing this, he hangs the works on a wall as if they were legitimate paintings. This new series of pieces addresses the concept of a false beginning, with the paintings’ support envisioned as faux sculpture. The premise is that doubt is embedded in the very physical material of the work, engaging the artist’s ongoing interest in the absurdist techniques of 20th century Modernism.

Burckhardt plays with the concept of paraeidolia (a psychological phenomenon that categorizes a vague and random stimulus as significant), allowing faces and shapes to crop up and assume primacy in the visual field. Burckhardt uses this powerful image-wiring inherent in all of us while employing a parallel track in abstraction that is simultaneously active. “It may not be possible, but this irreconcilable difference is quite enjoyable to me, as is the quixotic nature of the faux support and desired integrity of the completed paintings,” explains Burckhardt.

Burckhardt’s pieces seem to defy the pristine surfaces expected of most finished works. The surfaces are, instead, bumpy and uneven, thus serving alongside the plastic supports as a catalyst that propels a viewer to question what is real and unreal. Burckhardt has said, “I really love painting, but I also want to make fun of it. I want to have that full range of experience. I don’t want to be a true believer and wear blinkers about it. I want to acknowledge its absurdity.”

The works in the show include two oil-on-cast-plastic pieces, “Belle Buoy” and “A Desperate View.” The former piece presents an ostensibly recognizable set of minimalist images that evoke the shapes one might find in a still-life. Burckhardt presents a piece in vibrant primary colors in which his shapes play at our desire to make sense of abstractions by forcing them into recognizable forms. The attention to depth, the morphology of forms and patterns, and the organic folds and indentations of objects on the canvas are as much consequences of the viewing process as they are subliminal suggestions implanted into the canvas by the artist himself.

“A Desperate View” is a title based on the name of a 1949 Willem de Kooning talk, in which the artist famously stated, “My interest in desperation lies only in that sometimes I find myself having become desperate...If you take the attitude that it is not possible to do something, you have to prove it by doing it...” In this painting, a vibrant yellow object stands against a dark-blue backdrop, and looms in the foreground as an object that is simultaneously organic and mechanical. The hard-lined shapes of this painting also conjure the solid, identifiable styles of contemporary graffiti, which can assume a variety of meanings, from the purely ornamental aspects of a bold style to the functional facets of lettering and language. The result is that the piece transforms during the act of perception, turning a deceptively simple form into one that evokes myriad associations.

Burckhardt has also found ways to include elements of figuration in his work, including his interest in Asian art such as Indian miniatures and Chinese landscapes, which have allowed for the emphasis of qualities of craft and color, both of which bypass literal meaning and connect directly with the viewer’s intuition. Burckhardt’s ability to embrace both the abstract and the representational enables viewers to read his paintings in different, often contradictory, ways without coming to a decisive conclusion about them.

Tom Burckhardt lives and works in New York. He is a graduate of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and State University of New York, Purchase. Recent solo exhibitions include Tibor de Nagy Gallery and Caren Golden Fine Art, both New York; Pierogi Gallery, Brooklyn; Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; and Hunterdon Museum of Art, Clinton, NJ. His work has been exhibited in numerous institutions including, The Neuberger Museum, Purchase, NY; The City Museum, Aalst, Belgium; The Weatherspoon Museum, Greensboro, SC; The Tang, Saratoga Springs, NY; and The Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, MO. Burckhardt has been the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Grant (1997, 2005), a Guggenheim Foundation Grant (2009), a Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2011), a NYFA Grant (1996), and a Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Grant (1992). His work has been featured in publications, including, *Arforum*, *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Village Voice*, and *The Boston Globe*. This is the artist’s second exhibition with Gregory Lind.