

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Richard Forster and Ewan Gibbs
March 23 - May 11, 2013
Opening reception: Saturday, March 23, 6-8 pm
Artists' talk will begin at 7 pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Richard Forster and Ewan Gibbs. This is Forster's first presentation at Lora Reynolds Gallery and Gibbs's fourth. The show is made up of graphite drawings on paper.

British artists Richard Forster and Ewan Gibbs met after both being included in *Drawn from Photography*, an exhibition at the Drawing Center (New York) in 2011. Although each artist was unaware of the other's work before that exhibition, they have since forged a friendship based on a mutual respect for and interest in the translation of photographs into drawings.

This show, *Richard Forster and Ewan Gibbs*, brings together two independent bodies of work that were conceived, researched, and executed separately over the last year.

Richard Forster

Richard Forster's six works juxtapose images of women with geometric patterns and obscure architectural diagrams. Most of the pieces combine more than one of these images and seem to be rudimentary collages: a black-and-white photograph of a woman butted up next to a black-and-white wallpaper sample, for example, the two elements joined with masking tape or clear tape. In reality, though, these are graphite drawings—not photographs or collages—on a single piece of paper. The tape is drawn—the beige masking tape, painted. Forster's drawings are delicate and illusionistic.

The images of women in Forster's drawings are culled from *Arts Monthly Pictorial*, a periodical published in the 1920s by Edwin Bower Hesser. Forster is interested in the way these images of women from the 1920s offer a glimpse into their ideas about sexuality, body image, fashion, and femininity. He sees them as indicative of the experiments in personal and political identity that flappers tackled in the Roaring Twenties.

Richard Forster found the geometric patterns on his travels through East Germany; the patterns would not be out of place on a roll of wallpaper or a swath of furniture upholstery from the 1970s. The architectural diagrams—in *Austin Drawing I* and in the dark background areas of *Austin Drawing II*—are from Colin Rowe's *The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa* or *Texas Rangers (Notes on an Architectural Underground)*. These books and geometric patterns reveal Forster's interest in architecture, urban design, innovation, and the pursuit of large-scale, social progress.

When juxtaposed, the images of flapper women, wallpaper patterns, and architectural diagrams speak to Forster's interest in and research of the Modern Project, a broad political and philosophical movement spanning from the Middle Ages to present. Forster is specifically interested in the ramifications of Modernism since the Industrial Revolution. With these six drawings, Forster is concentrating on the parallels between 20th-century developments in feminism and the theory and practice of architectural and urban design.

To illustrate the momentum of these developments, Forster has sequenced the drawings. The proportion of height to width of the first five drawings is roughly 2:3, a proportion long associated with beauty and perfection. Each piece increases in size and incorporates additional elements into the collage—from one to four source images; tape; paper clips—this is an additive process that implies change and growth. The final, biggest drawing, *Austin Drawing II*, is a different, odd shape—not quite square—that might be described as proportionally disharmonious. That the sequence ends up here marks Richard Forster's insistence that we are still deeply entrenched in the Modern Project, that innovation and risk-taking are the catalysts for social growth, and that ever-evolving experiments in beauty are necessary for social progress of all kinds.

Ewan Gibbs

Ewan Gibbs's drawings in this show can be put into three groups: sweeping cemetery landscapes, individual gravestones, and soldiers' faces.

The cemetery and gravestone drawings were included in *Arlington National Cemetery*, Gibbs's recent solo exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. They were drawn from photographs Gibbs took of the military cemetery outside of Washington DC.

The drawings of soldiers' faces humanize the brief biographical details found on the gravestones. These pieces were drawn from photographs Gibbs found online: portraits of US paratroopers taken in 1943 by Arthur Rothstein for the Farm Security Administration.

Gibbs makes his drawings from photographs by overlaying a grid on a black-and-white picture, embossing an identically scaled grid onto his drawing paper, and making a single pencil mark in each grid square. Each unit of the grid is between one and five square millimeters. Each discrete mark within a drawing is identically shaped. (The drawings in this show are all made from hundreds of Xs.) Gibbs varies the density of each mark in order to create tonality across the image.

Each of Ewan Gibbs's bodies of work is an exhaustive exploration of a specific subject. Gibbs has shown three other such projects at Lora Reynolds Gallery: in 2005, he exhibited a series of views from top of the Empire State Building; in 2008, he presented images of baseball pitchers; and in 2010, he showed drawings of hotel room interiors and Austin landmarks.

Ewan Gibbs has had solo exhibitions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. His work has been included in group shows at institutions including the Drawing Center (New York) and the FLAG Art Foundation (New York). Gibbs was the 2009 commissioned artist for the Armory Show (New York). His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Tate Modern (London), the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art (Austin), the Denver Art Museum, and the Museum of London, among others.

Richard Forster was born in 1970 in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, England, and lives and works in Darlington, England. This is his first exhibition in a commercial gallery in the United States. In the weeks preceding this exhibition, Forster participated in the invitation-only Josef and Anni Albers Foundation artist residency program. He has had solo exhibitions at the FLAG Art Foundation (New York) and the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (England). His work has been included in group shows at the Tate Britain (London), the Weatherspoon Art Museum (North Carolina), and the Drawing Center (New York). Forster's work is in the collections of the FLAG Art Foundation, the Zabudowicz Collection (London), and the Lodeveans Collection (London), among others.