

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Manscape: Male as Subject and Object

June 30 – August 11, 2012

Opening reception:

Saturday, June 30, 2012 6-8 pm

Talk with curator Christopher Eamon 7 pm

Lora Reynolds Gallery is pleased to present *Manscape: Male as Subject and Object*, an exhibition of photography and video curated by Christopher Eamon. This is the second exhibition Eamon has curated for the gallery.

Artists have rigorously engaged the trope of the male gaze since the 1960s. Objectification of women in art and culture has been a key target of feminist critics for decades. The three young female artists in this exhibition, however, have taken *male* objectification to a new extreme. The strides these artists are making in the realm of identity politics are the most significant since the 1990s. The historical contribution from the only male artist in the show, on the other hand, predates the 90s by a decade. His investigation of modernism and its pitfalls serves a dose of realism to the exhibition's other forward-thinking artists.

Michele Abeles's work is a contemporary revisualization of the still life and the nude. She photographs arrangements in her studio that often include empty wine bottles, potted plants, draped fabric, and parts of naked white male bodies. Abeles only shows fragments of her models, whom she finds on Craigslist, in order to strip them of their identities and flatten any hierarchy of value within her pictures. In an Abeles photograph a man is the same as an inanimate object—everything is a prop. Abeles's work engages the histories of male-centricity, gendered representation, ethnocentrism, and the photographic medium with wry and mischievous wit.

John Massey's conceptual practice revolves around the utopian—and ultimately false—promises of modernism. Massey painstakingly builds and photographs scale models of interior architectural spaces. For the works in this show, the recurring idealized space is a maquette of Massey's studio. The projections are visual representations of foiled expectations: Muhammad Ali—"the Greatest"—being stripped of his title by Leon Spinks; the Pan Am building—at the time the biggest in New York—and the fatal helicopter crash on its roof. The *Studio Projections* are personal investigations in coming to terms with reality. Massey's studio-as-metaphor-for-self offers *Manscape* a divergent—if not bleak—perspective on the future of our social landscape.

Adina Popescu's *Jeremiah*—a portrait of a man accused of identity theft—presents an argument for embracing the self-destructive power of love and obsession. Jeremiah collapses crime, sex, and materialism into the single pleasure of consumption. The piece closes with a quote from the controversial French criminal-cum-writer Jean Genet, who was criticized for being a prisoner of his own delinquent tendencies.

Mariah Robertson typically engages two subjects: the male nude and colorful abstract geometric forms. In the darkroom she makes lush and expressive camera-less photographic collages with light and colored gels and sometimes pieces of negative film. She also photographs nude models she finds on Craigslist: men who are neither attractive nor grotesque but occupy "a confusing middle zone" of normalcy. For the works in this show, Robertson brings these two threads together by using optical illusions from Gestalt psychology as backdrops for the penises of her Craigslist models.

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Incisively irreverent, *Manscape* is an exploration of the subjectivity of contemporary male identity. The exhibition points with a jester's finger to the slippages between internal and external perceptions of maleness.

Christopher Eamon is an independent curator based in New York. He has curated exhibitions at institutions internationally, including at the Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin), MoMA PS1 (New York), and the Institute of Contemporary Arts (London). He is the former director of the distinguished Pamela and Richard Kramlich Collection (San Francisco) and former Assistant Curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York).

Also on view *Roy McMakin: A Few Drawings*, up through August 11, 2012.

Manscape: Male as Subject and Object will be on view through August 11, 2012. Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, 11:00 am to 6:00 pm and by appointment. Images may be viewed on our website at www.lorareynolds.com.

For more information contact Elizabeth Spheeris at 512.215.4965 or elizabeths@lorareynolds.com.