

Byrd Hammond Klossowski Olowka

November 30, 2018 - January 19, 2019

Galerie Balice Hertling is pleased to present an exhibition with works by David Byrd (1926 - 2013), Lewis Hammond (1987), Pierre Klossowski (1905 - 2001) and Paulina Olowka (1976)

« There are many more languages than we think: and man betrays himself more often than he desires. How things speak ! - but there are very few listeners, so that man can only, as it were, chatter on in the void when he pours out his confessions: he squanders his 'truths', as the sun does its light. - Isn't it rather a pity that the void has no ears? » Pierre Klossowski, Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle.

David Byrd was born in 1926 in Springfield, Illinois. He lived and worked in New York for the majority of his life. In the late 1940's, Byrd was trained as a painter following his army service in World War II. He studied at the Dolphin School of Art in Philadelphia and then under the French artist Amédée Ozenfant in New York. Byrd's work is informed by European modernists and American painters such as George Tooker. From the 1950s until the 1980s, Byrd worked as an orderly in a psychiatric ward of the Veteran's Administration Medical Hospital in Montrose, NY. This experience inspired his defining body of paintings. Byrd was a keen observer of the human condition and his rural environment. Paintings from the hospital are rendered with a delicate care and softness, despite the subject matter of emaciated bodies wandering halls, carrying out mundane tasks and slumped in corridors. Byrd's paintings consistently blend the real and the fantastical in unsettling ways that transcend the everyday sensibility that the works initially suggest. His paintings are realized with thinned oil paint utilizing a dry-brush technique. Byrd had his first solo show a few months before his death. Since then, Byrd's work was included in just a few group shows at Karma in New York, for example and a solo show of David Byrd will open in January at White Columns in New York.

Lewis Hammond was born in 1987 and lives and works in London. Hammond graduated from the Royal Academy in London in 2017. Though his work spans more than one medium, his focus is oil painting. His paintings examine ideas for potential psychological states, taking modern, prescient socio-political themes and reimagining them through a traditional, classically influenced style. Hammond's paintings offer fragments of a world that is both familiar and unknown. Hammond uses paint thinly, allowing softness and radiance, exposing the contact and movement of his hand on the surface of the canvas. It may speak of isolation, it extends towards us in a way that is redemptive, offering solace in the face of destruction.

Pierre Klossowski was born in 1905 in Paris and lived between France, Germany and Switzerland. Klossowski was an artist, novelist, historian, philosopher and theologian. His father Erich Klossowski, was an art historian and his mother, Baladine Klossowska was a painter. He grew up in a creative environment leading to his future collaborations with writers and academics, including André Gide, Jean Paulhan and Rainer Maria Rilke.

Pierre Klossowski's life-size mythological and allegorical images of the body create an intense world of violence and passion. Through the complexity of his oeuvre Klossowski became a symbol of modernism. He linked the intellectual with the physical, aesthetic, philosophical, literary, anthropological and political theories and influenced French thinkers like Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault.

BALICE HERTLING

Balice Hertling is proud to present two seldomly exhibited and significant works. Both drawings, *Hermaphrodite of the Alps* (1985) and *Au Miroir Révélateur* (1985) depict sexualized scenarios of Sadean decadence, that combine techniques of Italian Mannerism with the cerebral and aesthetic sensibilities of Surrealism, demonstrating the artist's well-rounded and astute knowledge of art history.

Paulina Ołowska was born in 1976 in Gdańsk, Poland. She is a multimedia artist who works with painting, performance and installation. Ołowska's work often focuses on figures of feminism, consumerism and popular aesthetics, as well as modernist utopias, and early 20th-century European avant-garde. Ołowska is also a curator, and the author of numerous actions and projects combining visual arts with elements of applied art or fashion.

Ołowska's work *Zofia Stonybroke* (2016) belongs to a series of paintings, collages and ceramics based on avant-garde playwright Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's play *The Mother* (1924). In 2015, Ołowska transformed a room in the Poetry and Dream collection display at Tate Modern into an installation and theatre set for the performance *The Mother an Unsavoury Play in Two Acts and an Epilogue* (2015). The room became a domestic interior inhabited by artist's works from Tate's collection and reflected Ołowska's interest in the appropriation of histories and the function of painting as a fictional space. The story was set in a bourgeois setting in which hallucinations, schizophrenia, alcoholism, madness and drug addiction turn into surrealist mayhem. The work exhibited in Balice Hertling's group show reflects the darkly comic and dynamic spirit of the performance.

The painting *Embrace* (2018) takes its key inspirations in the work of Maja Berezowska (1898-1978) and the New York based women's adult magazine *Viva* (1973-1980). Already before World War II Berezowska gained recognition as an author of subtle drawings of soft erotic content. Published by the Penthouse founder, Bob Guccione, *Viva. The International Magazine for Women*, was marketed as an adult magazine for women, publishing articles and essays relating to women's fantasies and their sexuality.