

Recurrent

Three Interpretations of the Human Figure



Pietrapiana



Josana Blue



Costain

AES Gallery

presents

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Piètrapiana
Josana Blue
Costain

May 5 - May 19, 2011

Curated by
AES Gallery
www.galleryaes.com

Exhibited at
2/20GALLERY
220 West 16th Street, NY, NY 10011
www.220gallery.net

Front Cover:

Piètrapiana, *Mud* 48 x 48 inches, oil on canvas, 2008
Josana Blue, *Arabesque* 48 x 60 inches, acrylic on canvas, 2008
Costain, *Traveling Music* 36 x 60 inches, acrylic on canvas, 1998



Mud
48 x 48 inches, oil on canvas, 2008

Pietrapiana



Buds
20 x 16 inches, oil and enamel on canvas, 2010



Island
16 x 16 inches, oil on canvas, 2011



Heat
36 x 36 inches, oil on canvas, 2011



Wave
36 x 36 inches, oil on canvas, 2011

Josana Blue



Blue for Minnesota
38 x 60 inches, acrylic and latex on (raw blue) canvas, 2011



She lives in Brooklyn...it's not that far
48 x 54 inches, acrylic & gouache on canvas, 2010



Progressive Regression #1
42 x 48 inches, triptych, 2003



Untitled
36 x 24 inches, acrylic and gouache on canvas, 2006



Left Bank
36 x 48 inches, oil on canvas, 2000



Donny Hathaway
36 x 24 inches, oil on canvas, 2006



Me
12 x 9 inches, oil on canvas, 2004



Leap Frog
20 x 24 inches, oil on canvas, 2011



Tea for Two
30 x 38 inches, oil on canvas, 2002

Pietrapiana
(www.pietrapiana.net)

Originally from Buenos Aires, Pietrapiana lives and works in New York City. His work explores the vulnerability of human nature as well as personal landscapes. Pietrapiana has been awarded with the Sheldon Berg Award (USA), was selected by the City of NY for a temporary mural, the LTA Program of the Guggenheim Museum, the Chashama Residency Program as well as the Space Residency in LIC. His work has been exhibited at Exit Art NY, AES Gallery NY, Local Project NY, The Queens Museum of Art NY and Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires, among other venues. His work is part of the Pfizer Corporate Collection, Springfield Museum of Art and private collections.

Exhibitions

- 2011 2/20 Gallery, NYC, Recurrent, group show. Curated by AES Gallery, NY
Jeffrey Leder Gallery, NY, Made in LIC, group exhibition
Jeffrey Leder Gallery, NY, Small Works Exhibition
- 2010 Babel, Space 37, NY, group show curated by Hector Canonge, QMAD
XXV Salon del Tango ilustrado 'Sigfredo Pastor', group show, Buenos Aires
- 2009 AES Gallery, Long Island City, NY "Pietrapiana/Paintings", solo show
Catalogo-Galeria de Arte, Espiritu Circular , group show curated by Sole Jordan,
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Josana Blue
(www.josanablue.com)

Josana Blue was born and raised in a small town in Maine. She attended West Virginia University on a Performance Grant Scholarship, obtaining her BFA with a major in painting and minors in sculpture, dance and psychology. Josana received her MA from New York University with a semester in Venice, Italy. She has also studied fashion and tailoring at both FIT and Parsons.

Exhibitions

- 2011 2/20 Gallery, NYC, Recurrent, group show. Curated by AES Gallery, NY
- 2010 AES Gallery, "Lady Paintings", Long Island City, NY
- 2009 smART Gallery, "326 Melrose", Brooklyn, NY
- 2008 The Zipper Factory, "Culture Bandit Soul 3", New York, NY
- 2007 The Zipper Factory, "Culture Bandit Soul", New York, NY

Costain
(www.galleryaes.com)

Costain was born in Washington state. After living in Hawaii, he moved to New York where he has been working for the past 15 years. He has always had an interest in the human figure, its primary source of inspiration. For the past few years, he has been working and teaching at the Greenwich House Pottery, pursuing his new interest in sculpture. His works has been purchased by private collectors in the United States and in Europe.

Exhibitions

- 2011 2/20 Gallery, NYC, Recurrent, group show. Curated by AES Gallery, NY
- 2010 The Greenwich Pottery House, "One More Than Five", New York, NY
- 2009 AES Gallery, "Paintings and Sculptures", Long Island City, NY
- 2008 Fading Ad Gallery, group exhibition, Brooklyn, , NY

Recurrent

From the onset of civilization, man has always been fascinated by his own image, from the bison hunter of Altamira to the deconstructions of Picasso, we have witnessed the evolution of his image through the ages. Art began as magic image-making to gain a grasp on reality, to control the position of power of man over the real world.

The artist, the creator, has always found a way to depict a precise image of his contemporaries. We are now, again, confronted with the same old riddle:

Who is this man of the 21st century? How can we define his image?

We are facing a new era. An era full of contradictions, disperse, lacking a center that can hold. We are losing faith in man itself. The world has become smaller. We are dominated by technology. Virtual reality replaces the real reality and man becomes more and more diffuse.

The 2/20 Gallery is proud to exhibit three different approaches to this ever-changing problem:

Three views, three artists, three languages. . .

Costain is the natural inheritor of Pollock, but he goes beyond the solutions of the old master. Where Pollock is abstract, Costain is figurative. Where Pollock sees painting as a field of gestures, Costain is organic, keeping always the representation of the human form as the main characteristic of his art. The drippings, the effervescence of colors and the jazzy use of space are here but at the service of the figuration. This man dissolves into his environment. He is not longer the measure of everything, but a part of a total that engulfs and at the same time defines him. Man is only a part of the universe and coalesces with it. He no longer controls his world. He is a part of the whole and dissolves his presence into the whirlpool of the space. A blurry representation of a human being, melted into his environment.

Pietrapiana, on the other hand, keeps alive the tradition of Italian painting from Giotto to the Mannerists. Elegant drawing, deep understanding of anatomy, concise use of the space, reflects his respect for the art of the past, but at the same time adds to the canvas an element of art nouveau that enlightens his work, making it more contemporary. The figures develop into one unit, interlocking one into the other. Man still is alone, but as a group. He does not acknowledge the others as a presence; he is alone in a crowd. Modern man feels the solitude of being many without having a definite image of himself. Fused into an anonymous labyrinth, he is not the isolated man of Bacon, but, in the group, he feels even more alone without a link to his peers.

Josana Blue works the female counterpart in this trilogy. She bases her art in the image of women, adding a new element to her representation, that of the urban landscape, especially the use of windows that are signs of a relief to the isolation of man. Her approach to the human figure is more abstract, the drawing highly stylized, bright colors, mostly primaries, defines her women as dancers/models, in a post-cubist space. But again, as with the others, her figures are not personalized, they lack individual identity. They are generalized: just figures in a space. Her chromatic solution, the decorative design, the composition of the space, comes from the tradition of modern European painting, and yet we can read in her elegant canvases, the work of a truly American (metropolitan) artist.

Without a sharp image of the self, we are left with the quest of who this new man is, renewed and unsolved again. These artists are back to a recurrent theme and the quest to express the feeling of their times. Pietrapiana, Josana Blue and Costain showed us their distinctive approaches and breathe new life to an old subject.

Every epoch has its man's image. The 20th century saw the end of monarchies and established order destroyed in the butchery of the Great War. Nietzsche's "new man" was the hope of a future that never materialized. The Second World War and the birth of the atomic era, with all the doubts and fears of the existential life, saw the appearance of the tormented and common hero - Camus' Sisyphus and Sartre's vision with no escape. We are still in the pursuit of our image of man.

At a time, where brush on canvas has lost its dominant position, it is encouraging to see these artists still using the traditional vocabulary of art-making, in a new and daring ways.

Miguel Herrera, painter, poet and Fulbright scholar, has a MFA from Pratt Institute and studied printmaking at the Academie Ranson, Paris, France. His work is in several museums and private collections, such as MoMA and Brooklyn Museum, among others. His latest book of poetry and drawings called "Fragments", have been just published. He is the owner/director of the 2/20 Gallery, in Chelsea, New York.

Back Cover:

Pietrapiana, *Heat* 36 x 36 inches, oil on canvas, 2011

Josana Blue, *Lady McQueen* 20 x 27 inches, acrylic and ink on canvas, 2006

Costain, *God Dammit!* 16 x 18 inches, oil on canvas, 2000



Pietrapiana



Josana Blue



Costain