



SCARAMOUCHE

JONATHAN VANDYKE

The Painter of the Hole

Opening: Sunday, May 5, 5 - 8pm

Exhibition dates: May 5 - June 23, 2013

Scaramouche is pleased to present *The Painter of the Hole*, Jonathan VanDyke's second solo exhibition with the gallery. VanDyke's new work evolves from his wall-mounted and free-standing sculptures, first exhibited at Scaramouche in 2009, that "perform" as they continuously drip paint directly onto the floor, and from his many recent live performances, in which actors and dancers move silently for hours while paint drips upon them and passes from body to body. The works offer signifiers we associate with painterly process - canvas, stained and marked with color, appears in objects and is represented in photographs - yet VanDyke has pushed and pulled painting in such a way that these signifiers are displaced. Undoing media-specific boundaries, VanDyke re-orientes modernist conventions, conflating painting with fiber arts, fashion, dance, textile design, and photography. With multiple collaborators and processes involved, the work subverts notions of painting's singularity and challenges the idea of individual authorship.

The title of the exhibit is borrowed from a series made by George Grosz in the late 1940s. Grosz portrayed a figure who, searching for a new vocabulary of making, found himself endlessly painting an image of a hole. Into this void VanDyke proposes, "painting not as a form so much as a restless mood, a conduit, a matrix that includes the making, presenting, perceiving, desiring, acquiring and physical decaying of paintings...I want to perform *The Painter* and perform *painting*, this stubborn manner of coloring that doggedly mirrors, marks, and circles us."

A series of large-scale, sewn canvas works in the exhibit evolved from a long-term collaboration with the dancers Bradley Teal Ellis and David Rafael Botana, who are also a couple. In a durational, live performance entitled *Cordoned Area*, the two improvise from VanDyke's score,

wrestling, dancing, and negotiating each other's bodies while liquid paint drips and seeps from their costumes: they start clean and conclude covered in sweat and color. In the midst of spectators, Ellis and Botana publicly navigate that space between a performed and an actual relationship. Following *Cordoned Area*, VanDyke invited the two back to the studio to work with him away from public view. There Ellis and Botana, with paint inserted in their clothing, interpret VanDyke's directions, dancing and making contact atop raw canvas. The paint serves as an unconscious trace, a trail of their interaction. This studio process results in a group of massive, marked canvases. VanDyke uses the canvases as raw material, cutting them into pieces and intermixing them to form opulent geometric patterns, and then sewing them back together. The patterns themselves reference 19th-century Amish quilts, Sonia Delauney fabric designs, the pants of Picasso's harlequins, the brickwork of a modern Danish housing block - patterns found next to and near the body.

Each painting is displayed on a partition placed in the midst of the space. The backs of the paintings, with their web of seams, are revealed, while the walls of the gallery remain empty. Hanging behind each painting is a photograph. For the creation of this series, Ellis and Botana's canvases (in their uncut stage) were used as backdrop and floor in elaborate studio sets. Models (friends and performers from other works) strike poses that exist somewhere between private ritual and fashion shoot. This image of the still body in front of the marked canvas recalls VanDyke's own 2011 solo performance *The Long Glimpse*, in which he stood and stared at a major Jackson Pollock work for 40 hours, making himself immobile in front of an "action" painting. The photographs also reference the work of artists who used the camera to explore private realms aside of their primary practice, such as the 1920's self-portraits of Gertrud Arndt -- an important fiber artist at the Bauhaus - and the charged tableau of George Platt Lynes, who made elaborately staged photos of performers, his lovers and friends. The heavily made-up models in VanDyke's series wear Mondrian necklaces and Jackson Pollock jeans amidst ab ex curtains and geometric partitions. We are reminded that, despite the value and language we add to it, despite the relentless preservation of its surfaces, painting exists, too, as swaths of fabric: like an outfit or piece of clothing, it moves out into the world, embedded with its own histories, posing and projecting meaning, always becoming something else.

Jonathan VanDyke is a visual artist based in New York City. Recent solo projects include *The Long Glimpse* at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in

Buffalo; *With One Hand Between Us*, a project for Performa 11 in New York; and *Obstructed View*, a performance and installation commissioned by The Power Plant in Toronto for the exhibition *Coming After*. VanDyke received an MFA in Sculpture from Bard College in 2005, attended the Skowhegan School in 2008, and in 2007 attended the Atlantic Center for the Arts, where he was mentored by the artist Paul Pfeiffer. His work has been reviewed in *ArtForum*, *Modern Painters*, *TimeOut New York*, *White Hot*, *Artslant*, *Art Papers*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. VanDyke's work has been featured in exhibitions at Socrates Sculpture Park, Islip Art Museum, The Museum of Fine Arts, Tallahassee, Vox Populi, Rutgers University, University of Wolverhampton, England, and Exile Gallery, Berlin, among others. He has received awards from the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation and the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and has served as a Visiting Artist Fellow at the University of Chicago and Illinois State University. Upcoming VanDyke's work can be seen in *No Name* at On Stellar Rays, New York, and *do it (outside)*, the newest iteration of the instruction-based exhibition curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist at Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City.