

The Figure Today

New York, NY

September 4 – September 27, 2008

San Francisco, CA

September 4 – October 25, 2008

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Sean Cheetham, *Korea Town*, 2007, oil on panel, 30" x 45"



Julia Fullerton-Batten, *Girls by Motorway*, 2005, lambda print, 40" x 54", edition of 5; 16 X 20 inches, edition of 10.



Julian Opie, *Ruth with Cigarette 5*, 2008, lambda print, matte-sealed, dry mounted onto dibond and contained in aluminum frames designed by the artist 39 1/4" x 27 3/8" edition of 50.

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, New York & San Francisco announce *The Figure Today*, a group exhibition featuring the work of: Nicholas Africano, Rachel Bensimon, Sean Cheetham, Dan Dailey, Gerald Förster, Julia Fullerton-Batten, Carla Gannis, Lynn Goldsmith, Gregory Grenon, Wes Hempel, Marilyn Holsing, Saul Leiter, Julian Opie, Gudrun Petersdorff, Chris Raecker, Wade Reynolds, Kay Ruane, Sonya Sklaroff, Janice Urnstein-Weissman and JeongMee Yoon. An opening reception for the exhibition will be held Thursday, September 4th, 2008, from 6-8pm in New York and from 5:30 to 7:30 pm in San Francisco.

Imagery of figures has appeared unwaveringly throughout the history of art. The first manifestations of artistic expression assumed figurative depictions, and while this prevalent tradition has lasted throughout our history, it is one that is consistently and constantly rediscovered in new manifestations, styles and media. The figure continually is morphed and shaped to form the trend and reflect the vision of the day. It has been an enduring theme throughout our visual history and is on the forefront of our current artistic vision. The figure has played an undying role within art of the past and continues to do the same today, which is why Jenkins Johnson Gallery is pleased to announce the upcoming show, *The Figure Today*.

The exhibition focuses on varying materializations of the figure in contemporary art through sculpture, photography, painting and video. From the representational cast glass work of Nicholas Africano to the old photographs defined by layers of paint by Saul Leiter, the figure remains the focus and loudest voice for these works. Whether the artist uses the figures depicted as commentary or is commenting on the figures, the artists shown, including Julia Fullerton-Batten, Janice Urnstein-Weissman, Sean Cheetham, Kay Ruane, Gregory Grenon, and Julian Opie, to name a few, all bring their unique interpretation of the figure to light. In the stylized photographs of Fullerton-Batten one sees teenage girls towering over miniature landscapes; the juxtaposition of her figures emphasize the irony of how marginalized, how shrunken, young girls can feel within society. Fullerton-Batten uses the heightened reality of her stylized scenes and figures as a speaking point. In contrast Julian Opie embraces the figure for its simple aesthetic, as in prints from the *Ruth with Cigarette* series. Opie's distinct style of reducing the figure to a series of sinuous curves accentuates the delightful ability of these representations to serve as flâneurs, and yet raises overall questions about what is essential. Distinctly unique are Gregory Grenon's portraits, predominantly of women's faces, serving as a fusion of early Fauvist works, like Henri Matisse's *Portrait of Madame Matisse (The Green Line)* from 1905, and an almost Cubist tendency, modified from pieces like Pablo Picasso's *Marie-Therese Walter*, 1937; Grenon's portraits are at once confrontational and vulnerable, reducing the figure to its arguably most important part – the face. His abstractions offer the viewer further insight into the identity captured – his own attempt at truly depicting the figure.

Over history, the figure within art eventually functioned as a physical representation of a specific person. Over time, the subject of the figure lost its sole function of portraiture and became an incredibly diverse and strong art form. The work of Kay Ruane clearly rests in the reflection of both the documentary element of the figure as well as combining the imaginary and creative vision of the artist. The figure in *Parrotting* is the realistic, though slightly stylized, self portrait of the artist. Yet, her surroundings and the view from her window are that of a different reality. The ambiguity of the identity of the figure immediately launches her audience into the otherworldliness of her imagined surroundings. In contrast, the strong lines and bold colors of Gregory Grenon's simplified and slightly abstracted woman in *Doors of Possibility* brings the reality of the figure's desperation to the forefront. His interpreted vision of the figure aptly conveys an internal dialogue of the woman depicted. Given the exciting diversity and possibility of expression, the works within this exhibition attempt to capture the powerful evolutionary machinations of figurate expression today.

Jenkins Johnson Gallery is proud to show *The Figure Today* in both our San Francisco gallery as well as our Chelsea gallery space. The exhibition will open in both locations on September 4. Please note the different lengths of the exhibition: close date of September 27 in New York and October 25 in San Francisco. Please contact either gallery for further information. www.jenkinsjohnsongallery.com.

