

RH CONTEMPORARY ART

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RH Contemporary Art Presents Four Solo Exhibitions

SoHyun Bae
Vasco Bendini
Sebastian Buerkner
Manor Grunewald

March 13 – June 6, 2015



Vasco Bendini, *July 27th*, from the series *Memory's Images*, 2004; Acrylic on canvas, 78 1/3 x 59 in.

New York City — [RH Contemporary Art](#), located in Chelsea at 437 W. 16th Street, will present four one-person exhibitions of work by the international artists SoHyun Bae, Vasco Bendini, Sebastian Buerkner and Manor Grunewald. The work of Bendini will be on view in New York City for the first time. The renowned Italian artist, whose work is in the collection of the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in Rome, passed away in January 2015. It is also the first New York exhibition for Buerkner, whose films have screened at the Tate Britain and Tate Modern in London. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, March 12, from 6 to 8 p.m.

SoHyun Bae

SoHyun Bae's powerful paintings, laced with vulnerability, combine elements of Jewish mysticism with references to Korean feminine identity. Her exhibition, *Wrapped Shards*, includes paintings from her series of the same name and three paintings from her *Jasper Lake* series. The *Wrapped Shards* series reflects the

influence of Bae's mentor, Nobel Prize-winning scholar, author and activist Elie Wiesel, as it explores the image of *tzimtzum*, also known as the "mystery of the breaking of the vessels," a Jewish mystical concept that attempts to explain the reasons for suffering in the world.

In these paintings, Bae metaphorically wraps the pieces of the broken vessels, applying rice paper to their sharp edges. This act references the practice of women of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), who gathered scraps of cloth to create patchworks, or *bojagi*, with which to wrap gifts and domestic objects. It introduces a feminine quality, specifically Korean, to the Jewish vision of the shattered world.

Bae's *Jasper Lake* series, a continuation of her *Wrapped Shards* series, is inspired by the Taoist iconography of the Land of the Immortal Peaches, an Eastern legend that tells the story of peaches that ripen every three thousand years and confer immortality on those who eat them. Bae considers Jasper Lake "the shadow of the Peach Orchard," she says.

Each painting in the series speaks to a unique aspect of the mystical concept and legend. For example, the painting *Pelvic Terrain* suggests a cavity containing a pool of water, "a source of life that drains through the crevices of time," she says. Bae, based in New York, has work in the collection of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, and has exhibited in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, Toronto, Montevideo and Bologna.

Vasco Bendini

The memorial exhibition *Traces of Dreams (Segni come sogni)* includes Vasco Bendini's paintings from 2004 to 2012. Bendini, who was born in Bologna in 1922 and died in Rome in 2015, studied with notable Italian artist Giorgio Morandi (1890–1964) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna. He is considered a pioneer of [Arte Informale](#), a group of artists that emerged in the wake of WWII whose abstract compositions reflected the instability and dysfunction of war. Deeply influenced by international politics, he made several works in direct response to acts of political aggression. His painting evolved from the strong and dramatic gestures of his 1950s canvases to the fluid and graceful compositions of the past 10 years. Spare in palette, the latter works possess a sense of luminescence, as patches of black and grey are interrupted by shards of glowing white or sweeps of striking hues.

Bendini's use of color is partly metaphorical. His blacks express the endless disharmony of human relations, while his whites embody "images of expectation," he said. These hopeful moments resemble rays of sunlight passing overhead that have temporarily alit on darker surfaces. His work is in the collections of numerous institutions, such as the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; the Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey; and the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Sebastian Buerkner

Originally trained as a painter, Sebastian Buerkner has worked exclusively in animation since 2004. His exhibition consists of the work *The Chimera of M.*, a stereoscopic film that attempts to marry narrative and form. The digitally animated film tells the story of a man who returns to a town where he once lived seeking to engage with his former environments and relationships. Evasive and with motives unclear, the protagonist provides viewers a fractured experience that is mirrored by the artist's digital filmmaking techniques. Though the dialogue is intimate and naturalistic, the visuals are futuristic and abstract. Dividing and pulsing, the depicted forms lend a robotic counterpoint to the spoken narrative.

"I wanted to explore the viability of 3-D space in film in regards to the possible enhancement of emotive experience and artistic expression," Buerkner says in relation to this project. "In this film the spatial and visual values are intentionally kept ambiguous, in order to generate a very distinct, very porous and foamy 3-D space."

Emphasizing the immersive capacity of cinema, Buerkner's work plays with issues of perception, purposely disorienting viewers through split screens and abstract imagery. Born in Berlin and now based in London, Buerkner has participated in group shows and had screenings at Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Whitechapel Gallery, the Showroom, London; Tate Liverpool and Tramway, Glasgow. He has had additional screenings and exhibitions in Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Norway.

Manor Grunewald

Interested in the "space between an original and its reproduction," Manor Grunewald creates works that explore techniques of mimicry and erasure. His exhibition, *Glances Closer to Blindness*, includes abstract paintings and mixed-media works that the artist made while in residence at the RH Contemporary Art residency in Dumbo, Brooklyn. Grunewald enjoys playing with craftsmanship and painting techniques that suggest digital reproductions and vice versa. He is drawn to a black-and-white palette, influenced by his collection of 1960s-era exhibition catalogues in which color artworks are reproduced in black and white. Grunewald mimics this technique, reproducing printed matter in two tones.

To achieve these effects, Grunewald makes digital prints of photocopies on canvas. These photocopies draw from a range of source material, including the cover of Olivia Newton John's 1981 pop album, *Physical*, which he happened to have in his studio. Upon using the images from the album, he discovered art historical parallels and significance to his own art-making process. He sees the image on the album cover as resembling the figure from *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818–19), by Théodore Géricault, while the song itself suggests the physical imperatives of the artist's studio practice.

After printing these images on canvas, he uses the viscous material that accumulates at the bottom of a jar of paintbrushes to paint a fog over the images. Through employing this normally discarded material, Grunewald takes a byproduct of the painting process and uses it to both obscure and create content. He considers his work an open-ended narrative, saying, "I don't like to point the audience in too much of a direction but instead provide reference points so they can make their own story of it." Based in Ghent, Belgium, Grunewald has exhibited in New York, San Francisco, Brussels, London and the Netherlands.

ABOUT RH CONTEMPORARY ART

RH Contemporary Art is dedicated to bringing international artists and their work to a global audience. The six-floor gallery in New York City's Chelsea art district offers an engaging and provocative program of exhibitions by emerging and established artists across all media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, video and installation. A distinctive online gallery, www.rhcontemporaryart.com, highlights a series of documentaries introducing artists and their processes. The program also features an art journal written by a roster of acclaimed curators, critics and artists. An artist residency located in Dumbo, Brooklyn, assists and nurtures artists in the creation of their work. Working with a team of international curators, RH Contemporary Art presents new opportunities to view, learn about and acquire works of fine art. Founded in 2013, RH Contemporary Art is a division of RH (Restoration Hardware Holdings, Inc. NYSE: RH).

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