

GLADSTONE GALLERY

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“Bridge Freezes Before Road”

June 23 through August 17

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to announce “Bridge Freezes Before Road” a group exhibition curated by Neville Wakefield. For his view of emerging trends in international art, Wakefield takes a road sign and poses it as a tabloid headline. It is the story of accidents waiting to happen. Marking paths of terrestrial migration, it warns of the perils of narrative, the dangers of elevation, the skid and slide of the unforeseen journey. Combining painting, sculpture, installation, and video, the works on view showcase a roster of new and familiar voices in all media, including Lali Chetwynd, Banks Violette, Martin Kippenberger, Dan Colen, and others. Surface as fetish, craft as obsession, the artists here, though disparate, relish in the degradation of the known and the perversion of the easy commodity.

Assembled in this show are works that span divides of generation and media. Some engage in the general terms and conditions of specific ideas. For Adam McEwen, the urban landscape is a map of fractured text. Aaron Young literally kicks the picturesque to the death, not of the author, but of the camera. Slater Bradley plays John Bonham to the beat of a different drum, a different era, a different stadium. Chris Burden and John Dogg bow to artless skill and its mastery of craft through obsession alone. Narratives frozen in time are also to be found in states of decay, foundering as it were, on the roadside of progress. Clive Barkers dartboard is the sign of a target that signals only its own ineffectuality just as Robert Smithson's ‘take’ on the Nevada landscape leaves everything behind.

While possibly confronting globalism and capitalism, many of these works take the face-value of surface for what it may not seem: beneath the fetish of commodity is a mythology recalling perversions of both intellectualism and low-brow culture. From Scott King's graphic collapse to Anne Collier's and John McCracken's interventions, these works muddle in the unknown on the broken stilts of the accepted. It's not the beach but the green men from outer space, not the better woman behind the great man, but how her hair falls out of place. “Bridge Freezes before Road” is a landscape of broken connections. Signposting the way are images and objects—bullets and cannonballs, gnomes and militia, hugs and drugs—an entropic trail of the living and the dead.

A fully-illustrated catalogue with an essay by Wakefield will accompany the exhibition.

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