

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Victor Man

515 West 24th Street, New York

March 6 - April 18, 2015

Opening March 5, 6 - 8 pm

Everything is a cryptogram if we desire it to be, and so often we do. We look at the world, of which art is a subset, and recode it as a maze, dream a Minotaur at its heart; and when we get there, it's over. This is how the viewer learns to view, now, the legacy of decades of conceptual art—a spectatorship style that is not, precisely, seeing. So it's day, or night, or both, and amid a suite of painted figures in submarine light, a repeated, changeable gesture argues for its own nameless significance, while elsewhere portraits cluster obliquely around a handheld Babylonian idol. Forget hallucinating themes to be disinterred, a conversation with art history. Things can also be hard to see because they're uncommon, now, like the active valuing and preserving of certain painterly traditions, techniques (tones, grounding, paint application, the use of lead white), a respect for unbounded emotional reverie. The head, a binary thing, says we are this or that, male or female, real or unreal. It denies that a painting, like a poem, might be a thing in itself, not a substitute for something else. Once activated, another and perhaps more acute complex of receptors—heart, instinct, bodily intelligence—refutes all that in turn, and the maze only expands. Make a leap from a centuries-old statue to Georges Bataille's Acéphale, to that word's Greek roots—akephalos, meaning headless—and to the figure of the chandler, beheading the candle in order to light it. The head is clipped; what's below bursts into flame. —Martin Herbert

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Victor Man. The exhibition will include several works from Man's series, "The Chandler," presented for the first time in the United States. Paintings in this series portray a seated, decapitated figure holding its head in its lap. The series' title refers to the medieval term for candle-maker, one who cuts off the top of a candle in order to light it. As in much of Man's work, "The Chandler" series alludes to historic motifs, in particular the Greek *acéphale*.

In the other works in the exhibition, multiple references co-exist, from Italian Pre-Renaissance painting to forms of primitivism. The references within these paintings bear a constant sense of repression of reality, which proliferated in Europe during the early avant-garde period at the beginning of the twentieth century. Within the stylistic codes of Man's works, one discovers a figurative idiom aspiring to a transhistorical station of painting that is beyond contemporaneity.

A catalogue with a narrative by Torsten Slama will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Victor Man was born in 1974 and lives in Rome and Cluj, Romania.

Claudia Comte

NO MELON NO LEMON

530 West 21st Street, New York

Through March 21, 2015

Paloma Varga Weisz

Bois Dormant

12 Rue du Grand Cerf, Brussels

Through March 6, 2015

For further information, please contact Ariel Hudes at 212 206 9300 or ahudes@gladstonegallery.com

New York gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm and Saturday, 12pm – 6pm