

M I C H A E L P A J O N

Palimpsest

6 February – 28 March 2015

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY is proud to announce, ***Palimpsest***, an exhibition of new collages by artist **MICHAEL PAJON**. The exhibition will open on **Friday 6 February** and run through **28 March, 2015**. The gallery will host an **artist reception on Saturday 7 March** from 6-9pm.

pal·imp·sest (/pælɪmp̩sɛst/) noun :: something reused or altered that still bears visible traces of its earlier form

This definition speaks to the very nature of collage. A medium composed of found materials, Pajon employs pre-photographic engravings and illustrations from the mid-1800's through the 1960's. Collage inspires Pajon to examine source materials in a way that is both critical and transformative. His approach flourishes from his own love of printed matter, an elegant technology, without which most modern innovations and information would not exist; that echoes throughout our daily lives.

- .. The medical manuals, whose beautifully produced lithography, illustrated the inner workings of the human body layer by layer like a pop-up book, a novelty now relegated to children's books.
- .. The matchbook advertisements that gave one a sense of place/time, often collected as mementos, but also a delivery device for phone numbers and conversation starters.
- .. The natural history journals filled with gorgeous illustrations, but now rife with scientific inaccuracy and poor knowledge of animal behavior built on the perspectives of dominant theories of the time.

By breaking with the context and repurposing these materials into cautionary fables, Vanitas portraits, scrolling Homeric landscapes and allegorical tales filled with romance and ennui, I hope to create something beautiful out of the imperfect and the antiquated. Inspired by the funerary art and reliquaries of early Catholicism, I create still lives in the fashion of Vanitas, a type of symbolic work of art especially associated with still life painting in the 16th and 17th centuries. The works I fashion can be taken literally as still lives (the materials themselves as both object and former belonging of another human) and also as metaphorically (adhering to much of the symbolism that inhabits much of the Vanitas style reminders of the transience of life, the futility of pleasure, and the certainty of death).

The toys and children's books employed show socialization, teach play and explain issues of morality, but they also demonstrate a patently false categorization of life as a series of black and white vignettes. I attempt to uncover the many shades of grey within our lives by coupling game boards, targets and images from children's stories with more realistic (and sometimes ominous) elements, visually and emotionally recomplicating what was once oversimplified.

Because human beings continuously alter the environments they occupy, the images in this body of work (much like the materials involved in creating these images) seek to explore our relationship to ourselves and to our environment. They attempt to reveal the real and imagined fears ingrained in us through the socialization of our childhood, fears that separate us, that fragment an otherwise collective human existence. They attempt to map the constant flow and buildup of our changing selves and our changing environments, borne from

that sediment of life, death, and change that, through erosion of time, bridges what was with what is and what will be.

MICHAEL PAJON attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, graduating in 2003 with a focus in printmaking. Eventually gravitating to the graphic nature of the medium that closely resembled the comics he loved, he worked closely as an assistant/studio manager to renowned artist Tony Fitzpatrick. During this time he started making assemblages of the bits and pieces he had accumulated from alleys, junkshops, and thrift stores, slicing up old children's book covers and rearranging their innards into disjointed tales of Americana.

Pajon's work has been exhibited in various venues worldwide, including the Illinois State Museum (Chicago, IL), Chicago Cultural Center, Prospect 1.5 curated by Dan Cameron (New Orleans, LA), Adam Baumgold Gallery (New York, NY), Nau-haus Art Space (Houston, TX), Mobile Museum of Art (Mobile, AL), Dishman Art Museum (Beaumont, TX), Acadiana Center for the Arts (Lafayette, LA) and JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY, New Orleans, LA. His work has been shown in numerous art fairs including VOLTA New York, VOLTA10 (Basel, Switzerland), Miami Project, Nova Art Fair Bridge London, Aqua Art Fair (Miami, FL), Next Art Fair, Chicago, IL, Texas Contemporary Art Fair (Houston, TX) and Art Market San Francisco.

Pajon has been featured in *Forbes*, *Installation Magazine*, *Kolaj Magazine*, *Basler Zeitung*, *Where Magazine*, *Juxtapoz*, *ArtInfo*, *Artlyst*, *New City*, *Artnet*, *Artslant*, *Oxford American*, *Gambit Weekly*, *The New Orleans Advocate* and *Pelican Bomb*. Pajon's work appears in numerous public and private collections including International Collage Center (New York, NY), 21c Museums (Louisville, KY; Cincinnati, OH; Bentonville, AR; Durham, NC), Purchase College, the Francis H. Williams Collection (Wellesley, MA), Megan Koza Young, Thomas Coleman and Michael Wilkinson.

For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.522.5471 or email matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com.



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