

rosenfeld porcini

press release

robert muntean
the hardcore of beauty

4 april – 31 may 2014

private view : Thursday 3 april
6:30-8:30pm

37 rathbone street
london w1t 1nz



Master and Everyone, 2014, oil on canvas, 180x210cm

rosenfeld porcini is proud to present *'The Hardcore of Beauty'*, an inaugural UK solo exhibition of Austrian painter Robert Muntean. The gallery will feature oil paintings on canvas as well as works on paper. This exhibition follows on from our 2013 London group show entitled *'The Birth of Cinema...And Beyond'*, where 3 large pieces by the artist were showcased.

One of the most important moments for the modern tradition of painting took place in the first two decades of twentieth century Vienna where artists like Klimt, Schiele, Gerstl, Moser, Schoenberg and Kokoschka created a vibrant revolutionary approach to painting and drawing, which was completely independent to what was happening in France and Russia. The rich palette and expressionistic drawing of the human figure were part of one of those magical moments, which in the course of history has every so often come together in a particular town and epoch. Vienna at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth was the home of Sigmund Freud, Adelphi Loos Hans Hoffman and Hugo von Hoffmannstahl as well as all the visual artists mentioned above; they managed to create a new vision for society, which spread across all the arts.

Notwithstanding the fact that Robert Muntean now lives in Berlin, he considers himself an Austrian painter and is very conscious of the strong tradition he comes from. After the various happenings of Nitsch, that involved both performance and body art by various photographers and conceptual artists alike, Muntean went head on into the Viennese legacy. His painting *'An Austrian Painter'* is taken from a well-known photograph of Schiele looking into a mirror; the palette immediately recalls that of Kokoschka and Moser, whilst his strongly angular construction of the image and division of space takes up the cubist tradition in a contemporary manner. Muntean's paintings have a formal complexity built up from multiple layers of applied paint, yet without a build up of material the surface remains uniform and flat whilst revealing a great depth. His formal approach includes a wide variety of hues and shades often of the same colour – in particular his use of green.

The complexity of Muntean's pictorial language merits repeated viewings; one sees how daring the juxtaposition of colours constructs the image itself. The painting *'Medici'* begins with two diagonal red brush strokes across the middle of the picture, although the dominant colour becomes surprisingly green. With some of the pieces such as *'The Austrian Painter'* and *'Sebastian'*, the narrative is buried beneath the layered brush strokes and reveals itself over time; upon first impression an abstract work, yet Muntean is as original in this guise as he is as a figurative painter.

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Robert Muntean's works resist any attempt at rapid consumption, which is such a recognizable feature of so much contemporary art where the image is absolute, rather than the exploration of language. If we look back to Picasso and Braque's early cubist masterpieces, it is their exploration of the pictorial plane and what this meant in terms of seeing, which rendered the movement so revolutionary; whether the subject was a woman or various forms of still life, it was secondary to how the painting was achieved. Unfortunately, these considerations are less prominent today. However, the time needed from us for these works to be understood is reminiscent of the attention required to enjoy Muntean's paintings.

Muntean's narrative, whilst always basing itself around the human figure, varies quite considerably from historical figures, cinematic characters to rock musicians. The artist himself considers this exhibition to be his most musical. There is a harmony and rhythm in the final works in how he applies the paint, which resonates with the dynamism and shading of a musical score.

After years of being in the artistic wilderness, painting has begun a return to its rightful prominence in the contemporary panorama. However, there are many artists who seem to be purely interested in narrative whilst Muntean, like Richter, Kiefer and others is as interested in form and how he can push the language of painting a step further in order to make it his own.

Notes to the editors

Born 1982 in Leoben, Austria. Lives and works in Berlin. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2000-2005) & the Academy of Visual Arts in Leipzig (2005-2006). Muntean did further studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna (2006).

Robert Muntean has exhibited with numerous museums and galleries in Europe and internationally in the USA and China. The artist has featured in the Leopold Museum, Vienna & cultural institutions such as the Austrian Cultural Forum, Berlin.

Rosenfeld Porcini Gallery

Founded in June 2011 by Ian Rosenfeld and Dario Porcini, rosenfeld porcini occupies a prime location in the heart of the dynamic gallery district of London's Fitzrovia with 3,000 square feet of gallery space. rosenfeld porcini has a strong international outlook. The gallery values a cross referencing approach both through exhibitions curated around themes in art and a cultural program focusing on unique events involving artists across all disciplines – visual arts, performance and music , which are meant to challenge perceptions.

Exhibition Schedule

6 June – 18 July	Mehran Elminia: Solo exhibition
24 July – 30 September	Bongsu Park & Keita Miyazaki

Nearest Tube: Oxford Circus, Tottenham Court Road & Goodge Street

Opening Times: Tuesday to Friday 11am - 7pm & Saturday 11am - 6pm