

Marlborough

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STEPHEN TALASNIK: THOUGHT PATTERN

MARLBOROUGH CHELSEA

March 25 - April 24, 2010

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that an exhibition of work by the American artist Stephen Talasnik will open on March 25, 2010 at Marlborough Chelsea at 545 West 25th Street. The exhibition will run concurrently with an exhibition of work by Magdalena Abakanowicz. This show is Talasnik's first at Marlborough Gallery since April 2008 and will present a new body of work including paintings, drawings and sculpture, as well as several works that blur and blend those distinctions. It follows recent exhibitions of the artist's work at the Queens Museum of Art, New York; Kido Press Tokyo; Japan Society, New York; Ohio University Art Gallery, Athens; Galerie Bailly, Paris and a recent exhibition and Purchase Prize Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York.

Inspired from an early age by the fantastic engineering and architectural designs of a wide variety of sources from Giovanni Battista Piranesi to Hugh Ferriss, the American artist Stephen Talasnik has become renown for his prints, drawings, paintings and sculpture. By applying his encyclopedic knowledge of art, architecture, engineering and design, he creates what Nancy Princenthal notes is "a wealth – a surfeit – of convincing information. Worlds abounding spin through his work, believably built and overbuilt, their stresses and loads accommodated as gracefully and heroically, and as redundantly, as by the Brooklyn Bridge... An avid scholar of work ranging from Futurist architecture to Impressionist drawing to taxonomic photographic projects... Talasnik is most interested in the places where physical observation comes up short."

In this new body of work Talasnik often pushes the boundaries of these disparate media, even combining them into what he describes as "a series of color works that give a visual presence to the conceptual process of invention of structure" and sculptures that "depict the anatomy of linear constructed form."

The drawings in this exhibition such as *Time Traveler* and *Curious Flight* recall Hilarie M. Sheets' description of his drawings in *ArtNews* as "exquisite," writing that they "brought to mind both the Russian Constructivists and movies of children at an amusement park." As Princenthal has elsewhere pointed out, Talasnik is "a consummate technician" and his drawings, "which have the shifting foci and narrative complexity of moving pictures, depict architectural fantasies indebted to the grand 19th-century structures made possible by steel-framed construction: glass palaces, train stations, suspension bridges."

The new sculpture is either work in basswood or bamboo such as *Odalisque* and *Naked* or the combinations of metallic powders and various polymers as in *Extension* and *Spine*. In these latter two works we see that even in sculpture Talasnik's formal vision is informed by a fundamental fascination with drawing in general and the element of graphite specifically. But on a narrative level, as Talasnik notes, "the sculpture alludes to the study of the human form, all skeletal structures."

The paintings in this new body of work such as *Endless Invention*, *Hyroglyphs* and *Misfit* represent a further development of the wide variety of media and imagery of his earlier drawings, prints and sculpture. They include paper cut stenciling, printmaking processes, various collage elements, low level bas relief, and architectonic framing devices. As he points out, the paintings are inspired by the history of printed and drawn diagrams, charts and typography. The color is closer to the aesthetics of print than it is to traditional painting with most color actually rolled or transferred on to the surface rather than applied by brush. In his words, "they function as invented documents that incorporate fictional architectural drawing, engineering as well as a history of botanical and anatomical illustrations and typography." The largest of these paintings are constructed as sectional combinations, alluding to the construction of "legends" or "instructional" code making, best exemplified by the tour-de-force painting *Codex*.

In each of these areas – drawing, painting, and sculpture – Talasnik's work explores the constant tension between our equally human desire to construct a logical world and to fantasize about the world beyond the laws of physics. As Princenthal wrote about Talasnik's work in *Art in America*, "As carefully articulated as they are spacially illogical, they could be residue from the dream lives of structural engineers."

Concurrent with *Thought Pattern* at Marlborough Chelsea, Talasnik's work will also be exhibited at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC in *Graphic Masters III: Highlights from the Smithsonian American Art Museum* through 2010. Also, opening on June 5, 2010 and running through the 2010 season, his large installation *Stream: A Folded Drawing*, will be exhibited at Storm King Art Center in Mountainville, NY. The piece is an infrastructural grid and pattern work which in its stadium-like design references "organic growth, variable repetition, and mathematically based structural configuration."

Talasnik's work may also be found in many public collections including Albertina, Vienna; Architecture Archives of Art Institute of Chicago; British Museum, London; Brooklyn Museum of Art; Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal; Cleveland Museum of Art; Detroit Institute of Art; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge; Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Hypo-Kulturstiftung, Munich; Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Kupferstichkabinett, Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna; National Gallery of Art, Washington; National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian, Washington; New York City Public Library; New York Historical Society; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam

An illustrated catalogue with an essay by the noted writer on visionary architecture, Lebbeus Woods, will accompany the exhibition.

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