

Marlborough

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Bill Jacklin / Recent Work, New York

February 14-March 17, 2012

The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce that an exhibition of new paintings and a steel wall-hanging by the artist Bill Jacklin, entitled *Bill Jacklin: Recent Work, New York*, will open February 14 with a reception from 6 to 8 PM, and continue through March 17, 2012. Jacklin, born and raised in London, has lived and worked in New York City and Rhode Island since 1985. The subjects of the 30 oils on canvas and one COR-TEN steel sculpture exhibited are taken from visual encounters specific to New York City.

The scenery of New York has inspired Jacklin since his arrival in the city. His past work has explored such landmarks as Grand Central Station, 57th Street, Roseland Ballroom, and Coney Island, among others. In the majority of Jacklin's paintings, emphasis is on the essence of place, on the sensation of being in an environment rather than on the topography and details of the setting itself. In this exhibition, the multiple renderings of specific locations, such as Times Square, Little Italy, and the Rockefeller Center skating rink, allow the viewer to revisit these spaces. Yet placing these scenes in time is nearly impossible, as if it is only the memory of the location that is actually being depicted. The recognizability of the settings without specific details is apparent in the triptych *Hot Legs, Times Square, NYC*, 2011. The artist utilizes a *sfumato* technique with a strong, painterly brush-stroke and vivid palette to accomplish an effect whereby the sensory experience supersedes the actual physicality of the location. The details of the city background remain in our view but out of focus, as figures, billboards, and buildings are refined to pure shapes with long shadows in suffuse light. There is no question, however, that this is Times Square.

In her essay for the exhibition catalog, Margaret Priest writes of Jacklin:

...while remaining quintessentially English, he has distilled all that is quintessentially New York – and placed it on canvas... Rather than capturing a likeness, he conjures a feeling. Jacklin's capacity to express the essence of the city distinguishes him from those artists who document street life. His is not a documentary practice. He is not an artist who catalogues his surroundings. Jacklin is an existential artist insistently affirming his place in the world through his urgent and emotive marking of where he is, what he sees and how he feels.

Jacklin achieves the ultimate distillation of figures into shadows with his steel wall hanging *Skaters*. Based on a painting from the 1990s, this is one of Jacklin's first forays into metalwork. The dark steel makes up the silhouettes of the skaters as well as their own shadows, and the light-filled negative space creates an arresting juxtaposition. The setting is presented as a panorama of lights and darks; this

contrast is allegorical, presenting a world where, in the words of the artist, "location is an arena for anything to happen – light or dark."

Many of Jacklin's paintings revolve around figures in a state of transition, moving through space, time and light. The painting *Zuccotti Park, NYC I*, 2011, depicts a snapshot of people frozen in action, some mid-stride, and all moving somewhere with a purpose. Only the tree in the foreground and small tents and massive skyscrapers in the background provide stability. Even the officers and horses of the police blockade have a frenetic energy, encapsulating the climate of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

Jacklin's work has a swirling, lyrical dynamism, converging forces in concentric patterns. This unceasing movement can be seen in the triptych *The Feast of San Gennaro, NYC*, 2011. What might ordinarily be a relatively calm dinner scene Jacklin has imparted with chaotic action. A lively flurry of activity revolves around the central table of diners. Dogs and people run across the foreground, while horses, pedestrians, flags and streamers take over the space behind the table. Jacklin captures the energy of the streets of Little Italy during this beloved celebration.

Jacklin began his career as an abstract minimalist exploring recurrent geometric patterns and the effects of light. The artist has said, "Over and above everything, I think my aim is about painting light, the way light informs the imagery." With his transition to representational painting, he has maintained this focus on the effect and movement of light.

Bill Jacklin has been the recipient of many prestigious awards and commissions. In 1989 he was elected Associate Member of the Royal Academy, London and in 1991, Royal Academician. His 1992 retrospective exhibition, *Urban Portraits, 1986-1992*, at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, traveled to Santiago de Compostela, Spain and in 1993 he spent three months in Hong Kong as the British Council's first artist-in-residence. The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority commissioned him in 1997 to paint a twenty-four foot-long mural for the new terminal at the Washington National Airport.

Jacklin's work can be found in many public collections throughout the world, including the British Museum, London; The Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum Boymans-van-Beuningen, Rotterdam; Royal Academy of Arts, London; Tate Gallery, London; Thyssen-Bornemisza Foundation, Castagnola; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and Yale Center for British Art, New Haven.

A fully illustrated color catalog with an essay by Margaret Priest will be available at the time of the exhibition.

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