

JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY

The Coffins of Paa Joe and the Pursuit of Happiness

524 West 24th street

Opening reception: **Thursday, June 8th**, from 6-8pm

The School, 25 Broad Street, Kinderhook, NY

Opening reception: **Saturday, June 24th**, from 2-6pm

Transportation is provided from Manhattan, please visit www.jackshainman.com/june24 for more information.

Jack Shainman Gallery is pleased to announce ***The Coffins of Paa Joe and the Pursuit of Happiness***, two inter-related shows at the gallery's Chelsea location and The School located in Kinderhook, NY.

Serving as the centerpiece of the large-scale exhibition, The Gold Coast Slave Castles of Paa Joe honor the Ghanaian legacy of *abebuu adekai*, or fantasy coffins. The ornate sarcophagi celebrate death and the afterlife, sculpted in the form of objects representative of the deceased and their interests. In the 1950s, *abebuu adekai* were used only by chiefs and priests, but more recently have become a growing trend in surrounding areas of Ghana, attracting the attention of contemporary art museums and galleries worldwide. In 2004, Claude Simard, the late co-founder of Jack Shainman Gallery, commissioned thirteen coffins in the form of European castles erected along the Gold Coast in the 15th century, which served as holding pens for America-bound slaves. These sculptures memorialize the captives in the custom of *abebuu adekai*, and recall the bleak American history that helped to integrate human suffering with Western tradition.

Paa Joe transforms the practical coffin into a work of art, and he, as the carpenter and craftsman, becomes a custodian of the spirit. This transcendental shift from the material to the metaphysical is the point of convergence for the works included in this exhibition. From the earliest artifacts on display, decorative Neolithic Chinese pottery, to the most contemporary works by Nina Chanel Abney, David Altmejd, Kerry James Marshall, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, to name a few, the artists presented here address in their own distinct way the notion of art as celebration, as a vehicle for personal salvation, or more broadly, creating beauty out of—or despite—one's surroundings. This diverse collection of works and objects reflect the wide-ranging influences that guide the gallery's program.

The universal drive to make art facilitates opportunity to reflect on the complexities of existence, offering perspectives of possibility, hope, and freedom, and a departure from the mundane. Bringing together works and objects from across historical period, culture, or geography, the exhibition presents the religiously inspired 17th century oil paintings of Francisco Pacheco to the Fauvist works of Jacques Villon, the anti-Nationalist drawings of George Grosz to the gregarious busts of John Ahearn. These artworks from past and present express the joys of making and

collecting, excavate lost narratives, and explore timeless themes that recur throughout history, from portraiture, to the motif of the Trinity and the enduring story of David and Goliath.

Concurrently on view this summer through September 24, 2017 is *If I Had Possession Over Judgement Day: Collections of Claude Simard* at the Tang Museum at Skidmore College, which presents a parallel exhibition from the collection of the gallery's late co-founder. Acquired both abroad and from within the United States, the diversity of the works spans an extensive range of medium, to country of origin and subject matter.

Gallery hours at **524 West 24th Street** are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm. Summer hours commence June 26th, and are Monday through Friday, 10am to 6pm. 513 West 20th Street is open by appointment only June 6 - September 7, 2017. **The School** is open on Saturdays from 11am to 6pm. For additional information and photographic material please contact Victoria Kung, SUTTON, Victoria.kung@suttonpr.com, 212 202 3402

INCLUDING WORKS BY THE FOLLOWING ARTISTS ACROSS BOTH VENUES:

NINA CHANEL ABNEY	ALFREDO JAAR
JOHN AHEARN	PAA JOE
DAVID ALTMEJD	HAYV KAHRAMAN
MAX BECKMANN	MARGARET KILGALLEN
HUMA BHABHA	SHERRIE LEVINE
NICK CAVE	KERRY JAMES MARSHALL
SEBASTIÁN DE LLANOS Y VALDÉS	JACKIE NICKERSON
RODRIGO DE VILLANDRANDO	TOYIN OJIH ODUTOLA
FRANCISCO DE ZURBARÁN & WORKSHOP	MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO
LIZ DESCHENES	MILTON RESNICK
MOIRA DRYER	COLLIER SCHORR
MAX ERNST	AARON SISKIND
WALKER EVANS	BECKY SUSS
BEVERLY FISHMAN	ROBERT THERRIEN
NAN GOLDIN	MICKALENE THOMAS
GEORGE GROSZ	WOLFGANG TILLMANS
ARTURO HERRERA	SIEBREN VERSTEEG
DAVID HOCKNEY	JACQUES VILLON
ZHANG HUAN	LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE

AND OTHERS

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