

Contact:

Kris Honeycutt
press@aldrichart.org
203.438.4519, x 125
aldrichart.org

For Immediate Release:

Painting In Four Takes

November 15, 2015, through April 3, 2016

Opening Reception: Sunday, November 15, 2-5pm

Ridgefield, CT (October, 2015): The last one hundred years have witnessed the explosion of virtually every available means and medium in the service of art making, yet painting has not only maintained a central position in visual art, but has also adapted creatively to rapid changes in our culture as a whole. Today, painting is embedded in the broad debate of actual vs. virtual, and its ability to balance what is illusive and what is real, what is tactile and what is optical, and what is emotive and what is formal, providing fertile ground for a diverse range of artists.

This fall, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, will present *Painting in Four Takes*, a series of solo exhibitions that will provide a window into the practices of four engaging painters who imbue the medium with relevance and character. The series, on view from November 15, 2015, through April 3, 2016, will mark the first time in over twenty years that The Aldrich has dedicated all of its galleries to painting.

“While some point to marketability as the basis for the unwavering position of painting as a leading visual arts medium, for many artists, painting provides the most relevant platform for expression, allowing for both the potential of innovation and deep historical continuity,” says Richard Klein, The Aldrich’s exhibitions director.

Aldrich curator Amy Smith-Stewart explains, “The four artists selected span generations, methods, and intentions, but all are deeply entrenched in what painting is and can be in the image-dominated atmosphere of our twenty-first century.”

The four exhibitions will be celebrated at a free opening reception from 2 to 5 pm on Sunday, November 15, to which the public is invited.

Steve DiBenedetto: Evidence of Everything

In a career that spans three decades, Steve DiBenedetto (b. 1958, Bronx, New York) has established himself as an idiosyncratic artist who has brought the pursuit of painting into the unpredictable chaos and flux that categorize the Post-Modern world. *Evidence of Everything* is his first major solo museum exhibition.

DiBenedetto has consistently rejected formalism throughout an era where both formal and conceptual approaches to painting have become de rigueur, taking a position where the canvas and the act of painting initiate a site for struggle, invention, and, ultimately, reinvention. Utilizing an inventory of leitmotifs, including the helicopter, octopus, wheel, and glass office tower, DiBenedetto paints and repaints his subjects in states of apocalyptic trauma where content and technique become unified, while the boundaries between the objective and subjective



The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

Contact:

Kris Honeycutt
press@aldrichart.org
203.438.4519, x 125
aldrichart.org

become uncertain. The artist's work has prophetic, philosophical, and mystical undercurrents, with imagery often forming geometric webs or mandala-like vortices that tear themselves apart only to reconstitute in thick, spectral passages of paint. Through his work, DiBenedetto has cast himself as a kind of baroque symbolist, working in the deep tradition of European Romanticism, with his excesses tempered by a terrible, yet transcendental beauty. "You never know what is enough," wrote William Blake, "unless you know what is more than enough." Marked by both foresight and revelation, DiBenedetto's painting exists in a continuum that flows from Blake to speculative novelist William Gibson.

Steve DiBenedetto: Evidence of Everything, organized by exhibitions director Richard Klein, is generously supported by Patrons Circle contributors David Nolan Gallery, Alvin Hall, Melvin Heller, Brooke and Daniel Neidich, Anna and Martin Rabinowitz, and Sara and John Shlesinger.

Hayal Pozanti: Deep Learning

The practice of Hayal Pozanti (b. 1983, Istanbul, Turkey) spans painting, digital animation, and sculpture. For her first solo museum exhibition, she will debut a new series of paintings and digital animations. Pozanti negotiates two opposing image-producing interfaces, the digital, with its mechanical, frenetic pace, and traditional studio practice, with its slowness, imperfection, and tactile insistence. To do so, she has invented "Instant Paradise": a thirty-one-character "alphabet," which she uses to generate shapes that never repeat themselves, nor have a recognizable equivalent in visual culture. Embedded within these shapes are bundles of mined data relating to the impact of contemporary technological developments on human lives. Through this process, Pozanti acts as a digital-to-analog encryption system so as to preserve information that could be lost or altered in the cloud. Her movement, from freehand to track pad, reinforces her intent, so that the final composition is equally successful online and in person. Alongside her paintings, and sometimes shown side by side, she creates digital animations, both informed by her back and forth translation of mechanical and digital processes and her desire for the means via which they are seen to be interchangeable, non hierarchical, and streamlined.

Hayal Pozanti: Deep Learning, organized by Aldrich curator Amy Smith-Stewart, is generously supported by Jennifer and Claude Amadeo and Patrons Circle contributors Serge and Ian Krawiecki Gazes.

Julia Rommel: Two Italians, Six Lifeguards

For her first solo museum exhibition, Julia Rommel (b. 1980, Salisbury, Maryland) will debut a series of new paintings presented alongside small works from 2010–2012. Rommel's oil paintings range from head to body size, and oscillate between cool and warm palettes, color fields of denim blues, moody greys, creamy whites, salmon pinks, and citrus hues. All are intimately connected to their edges, as they are stretched and re-stretched numerous times over the course of their making in a physical wrangle of layering and effacing. As with a haiku, Rommel's seemingly accessible surfaces belie their mysterious complexity, involving a laborious choreography of cutting, sanding, wiping, expunging, and overlaying, as the build-up and break down of the composition both reveals and disguises a history of choices and decisions, giving the paintings a rhythm and expression not unlike a life



The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

Contact:

Kris Honeycutt
press@aldrichart.org
203.438.4519, x 125
aldrichart.org

cycle. Taken in concert, Rommel's stressed surfaces, with their bends, folds, cracks, frayed edges, and staple holes, have a vitality that connects them to the viewer—and the viewer to the works—in various stages of being and becoming.

Julia Rommel: Two Italians, Six Lifeguard, organized by Aldrich curator Amy Smith-Stewart, is generously supported by Jennifer and Claude Amadeo and Patrons Circle contributors Sascha Bauer; Bureau, New York; Liz Goldman; and Serge and Ian Krawiecki Gazes.

Ruth Root, Old Odd and Oval

Old, Odd, and Oval will be Ruth Root's (b. 1967, Chicago, Illinois) first solo museum exhibition in the United States. Root's practice centers on an intensive investigation of color, material, form, and support. For more than two decades, she has worked within the language of abstract painting, exploring the physical and illusory boundary of wall and object, foreground and background, even inventing her own color wheel to challenge canonized color theory. *Old, Odd, and Oval*, will focus on her latest body of work, medium- to large-scale to site-engaged paintings that demonstrate her experimentations with new materials and fabrication methods as she combines hand-painted Plexiglas with colorful fabric patterns she designs digitally. Alongside these new works, The Aldrich will present an intimate salon-style hanging of Root's painted paper collages, initiated in 1998, to demonstrate her advancing investigation of color, pattern, and composition as noted influencers of what was to come (evidenced by the new works in the adjacent galleries). These small, shaped, works on paper are geometric abstractions that feature quirky cartoonish elements to rupture color fields—madcap flourishes humanizing pure abstract reduction.

Ruth Root: Old, Odd, and Oval, organized by Aldrich curator Amy Smith-Stewart, is generously supported by The Coby Foundation, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Valerie and Greg Jensen, and Patrons Circle contributor Lisa Ivorian-Jones.

Publications

Each exhibition will be accompanied by a free, fully illustrated, full-color publication with an essay by the curator. Ruth Root's publication will include an artist-designed takeaway: a limited-edition bookmark. Root began making the bookmarks when she had finished a large body of work and was trying to restart her practice by reading art books, bookmarking images as she read. She explains, "Somehow, my old drawings that were pieced from painted paper and printed scraps were around the



The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

Contact:

Kris Honeycutt
press@aldrichart.org
203.438.4519, x 125
aldrichart.org

studio and started to be used to bookmark oversized art books, then the bookmarks became a project of their own. It was as if these huge monumental paintings became smaller and elongated, functional and bookmarking other things that I wanted to think about or incorporate into my work.”

The Museum

Founded by Larry Aldrich in 1964, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is dedicated to fostering the work of innovative artists whose ideas and interpretations of the world around us serve as a platform to encourage creative thinking. It is the only museum in Connecticut devoted to contemporary art, and throughout its fifty-year history has engaged its community with thought-provoking exhibitions and education programs.

The Museum’s education and public programs are designed to connect visitors of all ages to contemporary art through innovative learning approaches in hands-on workshops, tours, and presentations led by artists, curators, Museum educators, and experts in related fields. Area schools are served by curriculum-aligned on-site and in-school programs, as well as teachers’ professional development training.

Supporters

The Aldrich, in addition to significant support from its Board of Trustees, receives contributions from many dedicated friends and patrons. Major funding for Museum programs and operations has been provided by the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation; the Leir Charitable Foundations; The Goldstone Family Foundation; the Anne S. Richardson Fund; and Fairfield Fine Art.

Support for Education and Public programs has been provided by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation; JoyRide Ridgefield; Newman’s Own Foundation; Fairfield County Bank, Fairfield County’s Community Foundation; Ridgefield Education Foundation; The Cowles Charitable Trust; and The Gage Fund.

HamletHub; TownVibe, publishers of *Ridgefield Magazine*; and WSHU Public Radio are the official media sponsors of The Aldrich in 2015.

For additional information and images, please contact:

Kris Honeycutt
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum
press@aldrichart.org
203.438.4519, extension 125

