

JASON MCCOY GALLERY

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PHILIP SMITH: SIGN LANGUAGE

November 7 – December 20, 2013

Reception for the artist: Thursday, November 7, 6-8 PM



Turkish Delight, 2013, oil and wax on canvas, 43 x 53 in.

Jason McCoy Gallery is pleased to present *Sign Language*, an exhibition of new paintings by Philip Smith.

Philip Smith's pictographic work was first seen in the seminal *Pictures Exhibition* at Artists Space. Curated by Douglas Crimp, the show included Robert Longo, Sherrie Levine, Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein and Philip Smith. These five artists established the movement that has become known as *The Pictures Generation* that now includes Cindy Sherman, Richard Prince, Laurie Simmons and others.

The curious and psychologically-charged images in Smith's new paintings are drawn from found imagery in 1950s Cold War spy manuals, lingerie ads, books on mysticism and numerology, lost magic manuals and early genetic diagrams. Smith works the canvas like a physicist's blackboard where he can postulate new image formulations and equations. The paintings are characterized by slightly visible erased imagery that serves as both memory and ghost-like images reminiscent of Smith's childhood that was filled with séances and talking spirits. The result is a disorienting universe characteristic of Smith's long association with both pop culture and metaphysical practices.

"I think of the paintings really as drawings, as if the canvas were just a large sheet of paper. This allows me to work freely and automatically as if in some sort of trance state. The result is somewhat similar to the intent of Jain paintings from India or Tibetan thangkhas, which serve to open a door to another realm. This often results in a curious sensation of time travel for the viewer."

Smith's work has been included in both the Whitney and Beijing Biennial and is in the permanent collection of the Whitney, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas Museum of Art, Miami Art Museum, Detroit Institute of Art, among others. Smith's unusual life story has been captured in his memoir, *WALKING THROUGH WALLS*, published by Simon and Schuster. It is the true story of growing up with a father who discovers that he has supernatural powers and can talk to the dead and heal the sick. SHOWTIME has acquired the book for a weekly television series, now in development.

Please contact Stephanie Simmons at 212-319-1996 or stephanie@jasonmccoyinc.com for further information.