

CHARLOTTE JACKSON FINE ART PRESENTS:

JOHN BEECH
Time Expanded



August 31 - September 30, 2012

A nest of irregular metal beams dominating the floor. Plexiglas boxes mounted to the wall trapping oozing peels of color. Saturated and fragmented paintings, some covered in Plexiglas, some seeming to peel away from themselves. Strange flowers made of scraps—paint stirring sticks and other studio detritus, blooming from the walls. The viewer can't help but be pulled all ways at once, each piece beckons for attention. It is a rare event to walk through an exhibition with such a wide array of techniques, formats, and materials all by the same artist.

John Beech is a quintessential 21st century artist, moving like a virtuoso from one set of skills to another with each separate piece. Sometimes painter, sometimes welder, sometimes sculptor, sometimes tinker, sometimes photographer, sometimes carpenter, always artist, Beech follows, not a set of rules or theories, but the prompting of his intuition as he deftly navigates the problems that arise in front of him in the moment of making a work of art. Beech says, "I find fundamentally that letting a work evolve through chance during the process of creation overrides the solipsism of the individual. A better 'chance' to get at something larger.

"Amid the diversity of works there are two series in Time Expanded which dominate: Blagen (which comes from an old German word for "irascible child"), and another aptly named series, Lotus. The Blagen series are, in a way, paintings contained in a wall-mounted Plexiglas box. Inside each is a box writhing profusion of peelings, blobs, and fragments of dried paint. The effect is something like what might happen if an abstract expressionist painting attempted to crawl off of its canvas, striving for three-dimensionality. The boxes contain and constrain the profusion, so that the pieces balance quite precisely between fecundity and severity.

The Lotus pieces, on the other hand, have burst their bounds. Made of carefully aligned constructions of studio detritus, including paint stirring sticks, Plexi trimmings, bits of metal, these "flowers" protrude from the wall in a paradox of wild stillness. Beech is no stranger to making works that move, both floor sculpture and paintings, and these pieces are also semi-mobile. Hung, they shift to find balance with gravity—so their ultimate arrangement becomes a mixture of craft and chance. Although strands of art history might pop up in the brain as the viewer moves from piece to piece (Minimalism, Neo-Pop, even Dadaism or Surrealism), none of the works rests in a category. There is an intimation of something both older and newer going on here. It is not hard to understand why, when asked about his origins as an artist, Beech includes early

experiences fossil hunting, a visit to Stonehenge, and ancient burial mounds near his home along with his studies at Berkeley and influential artists like Antoni Tàpies, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg, Blinky Palermo, Willem de Kooning, and Jackson Pollock (among others), as well as formative journeys to Morocco and India.

As Beech insists, it is not subject matter that matters here. Like the materials or the techniques involved, the subject matter itself is only a means to an end. Though the pieces certainly express a great deal of wit and even gentle irony, their goal is nothing less than the expression of Reality itself. A tall order, certainly. But as Beech notes, “Most works fall short of attaining this. The quest to make a work that manifests Reality is the only authentic driving force behind artistic invention.” In our rapidly shifting culture of the digital, any image that lasts more than a moment is almost an anachronism. There is an insistence in Beech’s work, a material assertion that seems to confound this trend. The paintings protrude from the wall, spike up from the floor, they arrest a viewer in their tracks, quite literally. The ordinary and banal are highlighted, captured, and morphed into art. We must stop, look, and pay attention. Time Expanded promises viewers an antidote to the disappearing image, and perhaps even a glimpse of that illusive ground ... reality.









JB0082 JB0083 JB0084

JB0085 JB0086 JB0087



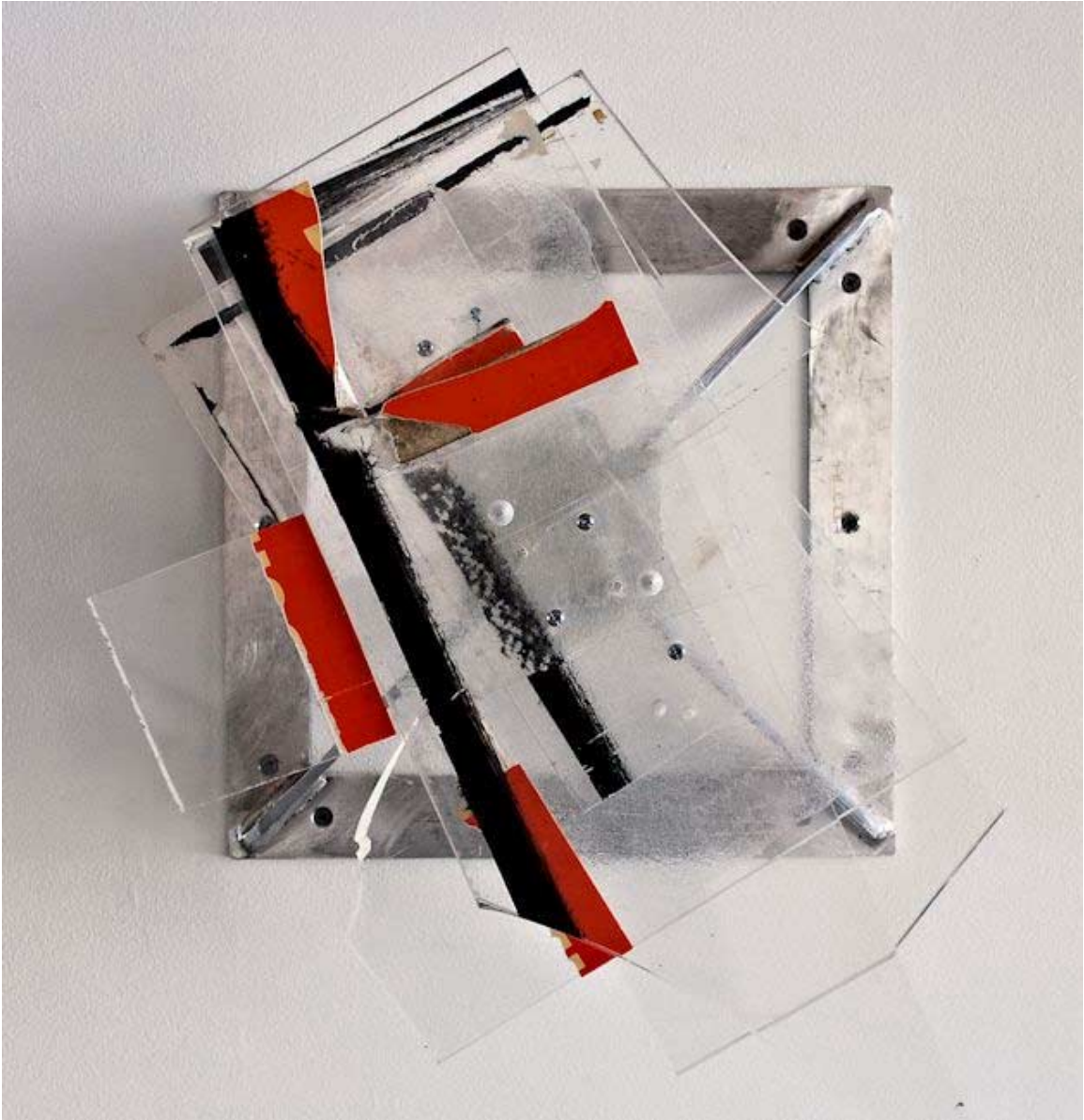
Painting #1, 2011-2012
black and white photographs, enamel, linen
53 x 40 x 1 1/2 inches
JB0075



Paint Rag Case #22, 2012
fabric, gloves, enamel, acrylic sheet
116 1/2 x 45 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches
JB0073



Painting #25, 2012
black and white photographs, enamel, acrylic sheet, screws, canvas
55 x 38 x 5 inches
JB0074



Night Shift In Moscow, 2012
aluminum, acrylic sheet, enamel, plastic, bolts
21 x 15 3/4 x 10 inches
JB0071



Night Shift In Moscow - Detail



Time Is Elastic, 2012
aluminum, enamel, bolts
58 x 176 x 156 inches
JB0070



Untitled Drawing, 8/21/2012, 2012
Mixed Media on Paper
28 1/2 x 18 1/2 inches
JB0082

Untitled Drawing, 8/3/2012, 2012
Mixed Media on Paper
30 x 20 inches
JB0083

Untitled Drawing, 8/16/2012, 2012
Mixed Media on Paper
30 x 20 inches
JB0084



Untitled Drawing, 8/5/2012, 2012
Mixed Media on Paper
30 x 20 inches
JB0085



Untitled Drawing, 8/20/2012, 2012
Mixed Media on Paper
28 1/2 x 18 1/2 inches
JB0086



Untitled Drawing, 8/16/2012, 2012
Mixed Media on Paper
30 x 20 inches
JB0087



Lotus #29, 2012
wood, enamel, screws, rotating hardware
18 1/2 x 17 1/4 x 7 inches
JB0079



Dumpster Drawing #170, 2008
Enamel on black and white photo
31 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches
JB0066



Lotus #28, 2012
wood, steel, enamel, rotating hardware
42 1/2 x 43 1/4 x 6 inches
JB0072

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