

# Galerie Francesca Pia

## Press Release

August 2009

### TOP 10 ALLEGORIES

Wallace Berman, Alexandre Bianchini, Kim Seob Bonisegni, AA Bronson, Valentin Carron, Bruce Conner, Andreas Dobler, Sylvie Fleury, Vidya Gastaldon, Mathis Gasser, General Idea, Liam Gillick, Wade Guyton, Fabrice Gygi, Richard Hamilton, David Hominal, Richard Hoeck & John Miller, Pierre Huyghe, Ben Kinmont, Martin Kippenberger, Cary Kwok, Louise Lawler, Balthazar Lovay, Jérôme Massard, Minimetal, Damien Navarro, No Picture Available, Philippe Parreno, Mai-Thu Perret, Raymond Pettibon, Seth Price, Marta Riniker-Radich, Emanuel Rossetti, Dieter Roth, Josh Smith, Blair Thurman, John Tremblay

Curated by Hard Hat, Geneva

August 29 – September 26, 2009

Opening on Friday August 28, 2009, 6-8 p.m.

“Top 10 Allegories” aims to produce a polyphonic image of our activities in Geneva. In the past few years, Hard Hat has become a hybrid contemporary art structure, which acts simultaneously as an exhibition space, a publisher of artists’ multiples and editions, and an office for roving curatorial projects which provides an all-purpose Kunstvermittlung service to a varying number of, mostly younger, local artists.

The show will thus include multiplied works of our own production, that of JRP - Genève (our previous incarnation, 1997-2004), and that of our next-door neighbors from Circuit, in Lausanne, as well as editions by older artists whose work continue to inspire us, and whose presence here echoes our recently inaugurated program of historical exhibitions. While some of these objects have a status of “artworks,” other clearly fall into the category of “ephemera,” and will be indiscriminately exhibited alongside unique pieces by artists we work with repeatedly, or plan to work with in the near future. Among them, Marta Riniker-Radich, Mathis Gasser and Damien Navarro, three artists in their early twenties whose first solo exhibition was or will shortly be held within our walls.

One of the paradoxes of a structure like ours is that, on one level, we regard art objects to be mere by-products of our numerous activities. Hard Hat is collectively run by an artist, a publisher and a curator. Multiples and exhibitions are produced along the way of long-term professional relationships with artists, and are never thought of as an end in themselves. For example, we recently cast a sculpture by Valentin Carron designed to play a pivotal role in a larger exhibition of the artist at Via Farini in Milan. Or, as one of us also works for a concert venue, we were able to commission a number of posters for bands such as Acid Mother Temple or Konono N°1 from Vidya Gastaldon. Above all, we consider Hard Hat to be a nexus for professional exchanges and social interactions. At the end of the day, we are not unhappy to be as well known in Geneva for the parties and concerts we organize as for our multiple and exhibition program, the one yearly event that brings in the largest crowd being our celebration of the Fête de l’Escalade, – a local festival which commemorates a four hundred year-old military victory over the French.

Yet, on another level, the production and exhibition of art objects is our *raison d’être*, and we never cease to believe in the quasi-magical power they exert over us. The hybrid nature of our structure runs deep, all the way to our business model, and although we are a non-profit organization, we also function like a gallery. Not just in the simple sense that we sell artworks – which we do, to pay the rent and finances all of our other activities –, but also, more profoundly, because we have tailored Hard Hat as a place where other believers can come and indulge, for a sum, in their like-minded devotion – be it fetishistic, shamanistic, or otherwise.

We are particularly happy to be able once again to organize a show at Francesca Pia’s gallery. While our last official public collaboration dates back to 2003 (“JRP Editions – Selected Multiples”, in Bern), our dialogue has been uninterrupted for close to a decade. The fact that we continuously champion many of the same artists is a testimony to the single-mindedness and focus of our exchanges.

Concurrently with this exhibition, Hard Hat will open in Geneva on September 17 “Bridges and Tunnels”, a group show curated by New Jersey, Basel.

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