

PearlLam Galleries

Pearl Lam Galleries presents
Jason Martin's first solo exhibition in Hong Kong

SACRED MASTERS, SACRED MONSTERS **Denizens of the Demonic Demagogue**



Jezebel (2012), pure pigment on aluminium, 280 x 110 x 82 cm

Exhibition Dates

15 March–10 April, 2013

Monday–Saturday, 10am–7pm

Opening reception on Thursday, 14 March, 2013, 6–8pm

Pearl Lam Galleries, 6/F, Pedder Building, 12 Pedder Street, Central, Hong Kong

HONG KONG—Pearl Lam Galleries is pleased to present internationally renowned British artist **Jason Martin**'s first solo exhibition in Hong Kong: **Sacred Masters, Sacred Monsters: Denizens of the Demonic Demagogue**, opening to the public **15 March 2013**. In this important exhibition, Martin presents a new body of work where each painting has been named after one of the world's most notorious or tyrannical dictators. Each has been composed in his signature style, using heavy impasto layers of oil paint tinted with vivid pure pigment.

Jason Martin exploded onto the global visual arts scene in the late 1990s in London as an active member of the 'Young British Artist' generation, who came to the world's attention in the ground-breaking show *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, exhibiting alongside fellow 'YBAs' Damien Hirst and Tracey Emin.

Jason Martin pushes the boundaries of paint beyond the two-dimensional. Working on large surfaces of aluminium, the artist moulds, scrapes and gouges oils to create turbulent, worked surfaces, where the paint gains an almost sculptural quality in thickness and weight. The gesture of the artist is made visible with paint smoothed into tumultuous waves or sliced to reveal the shine of the metal beneath. The artist intensifies each work by using just one colour—rich purple, electric blues and lime green. Martin allows the material itself to become the subject of the work, the colour and the texture of the paint dominating the viewer's experience.

The names used as titles for these works span across time and space, from ancient history to the Second World War, across Guatemala, Peru, Costa Rica, Japan, Turkey and Vietnam. Franco, the historic military leader of Spain who still remains Europe's longest running political dictator, is here represented by one of the largest works in the show. At almost two metres wide, its bright blue dominates the room, drawing the viewer in to reveal its moulded surface.

Further works have been titled after Tojo, the Japanese Prime Minister responsible for the attack on Pearl Harbour during the Second World War; Ataturk, the revolutionary statesman credited as the first President of Turkey; and Obregon, the Mexican President known for assassinating his predecessor. In the exhibition, *Jezebel* (2012) stands out as the only canvas to stray from the rectangular format with its curved shape representing the only female historical figure on display. Rather than being reduced by its more feminine form, Jezebel is the tallest work in the show, its deep magenta hue and sensual curves enticing the viewer.

These names gain a mystical quality in their association with Martin's work. The heavily worked surfaces are suggestive of emotion—in some comparable to scarring, yet in others the smooth texture soothing.

"Whether by democratic election or cultural reverie, nothing will stop us giving power to those ideologies that champion figureheads and appeal en masse. Our choices, or what we feel as our given rights, our liberty or freedom to pursue our own ideals, are key to a modern life in a very uncivilised world. And by those choices we empower leaders that appeal to our emotions, yet more significantly to our very concentrated prejudices." Jason Martin, March 2013

Sacred Masters, Sacred Monsters: Denizens of the Demonic Demagogue will be the first solo exhibition by a European artist at Pearl Lam Galleries Hong Kong since it opened in May 2012. The exhibition represents the gallery's mission to encourage cultural exchange between the East and West, bringing important Western artists to a new audience in Asia.

"We are delighted to have Jason Martin's solo exhibition in Hong Kong as our first by an international artist since we opened last May. I have always been attracted to abstract painting—especially those that are physical and sculptural, and first discovered Martin's work over 12 years ago. Following last year's inaugural Chinese contemporary abstract show, it is natural for us to feature an abstract artist for our first Western artist solo exhibition who is representative of our gallery's mission of nurturing cultural exchange." Pearl Lam, founder of Pearl Lam Galleries, March 2013

About Jason Martin

Martin, who was born in Jersey in the Channel Islands, takes inspiration from both Minimalism and Abstract Expressionism and the Western tradition of gestural painting. He studied at Chelsea School of Art and Goldsmiths College in London between 1989 and 1993. His distinct style received early recognition, exhibiting in London, Japan and Germany. In 1997, he was catapulted into the global visual arts scene through his participation in the groundbreaking exhibition *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*. His works have been widely seen in the USA and Europe in the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, in 2009 and Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga in 2008. Martin's works are in numerous private and public collections worldwide, such as the Government Art Collection, Great Britain; FNAC, France; the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; the Denver Art Museum; and Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.

About Pearl Lam Galleries

Founded by Pearl Lam, the Galleries' mission is to stimulate cross-cultural dialogue and cultural exchange between the East and West by establishing distinct and rigorous programming in each of its gallery spaces in Hong Kong, Shanghai and the forthcoming Singapore gallery. Through this programming, the Galleries seeks to engage the local community whilst bringing an international audience closer to home.

Pearl Lam Galleries is dedicated to championing Chinese artists who re-evaluate the philosophy and perception of Chinese contemporary art, whilst also committed to presenting major solo exhibitions by international artists including Jim Lambie, Jenny Holzer and Yinka Shonibare, MBE.

Press Enquiries

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