

DAVE MCDERMOTT

The Power and Influence of Joseph Wiseman

November 29, 2013 - January 18, 2014

Opening: 29 November 2013, from 5 p.m. till 8 p.m.
Frans Halsstraat 26. In presence of the artist.

GRIMM is proud to announce "The Power and Influence of Joseph Wiseman", a new solo exhibition by Dave McDermott.

In his second solo show at the gallery, Dave McDermott deals with the relationship between free will and fate. McDermott presents a layered system of allegorical and metaphorical framing devices, weaving together references to Japanese Ukiyo-e paintings, old James Bond stories, board games, and Italian "dream cinema" as structures through which to investigate these themes.

In these instances of popular culture, the free will versus fate dynamic is simplified into a splitting of the human psyche into two parts; a hero representing free will and a villain representing a threatened and seemingly unavoidable fate. Observing that the opposing characters possess similar traits, the only real difference between the two being motivation, McDermott adopted and perverted this familiar model, basing his work on an imagined adaptation that is a story about making a story, specifically a version in which each character represented both free will and fate. The artist's conceit includes hero's, villains, femme fatales, etc, but also fabricated personas for actors who might play them, the theatre in which they might perform, and the interpersonal relationships that might arise if you erased the boundary between actor and character (the title is a reference to the actor who played the eponymous villain of the first James Bond movie Dr. No), or reality and fiction. The exercise results in an up-ended idea of allegory, substituting chaos and beauty for what is usually some moral or political lesson. For McDermott, these themes represent an ongoing interest in the duality of our nature, and how we choose to acknowledge and deal with the inherent conflicts that invariably arise within ourselves.

This duality is clearly represented in McDermott's work. His paintings and drawings all display an intentional in-betweenness. Equally reliant on their tactile nature as objects as much as the images they carry, McDermott's



Dave McDermott, *SCLBAG* (detail), 2013

paintings are unsettling balances of textures, pitting graphic simplicity against painterliness, flatness against depth, humour against pathos, using all equally but never tipping far enough in any one direction to allow for easy categorization.

One work in the exhibition, *De Raad (The Board)*, a large systematic patchwork of colourful squares, calls to mind game boards, and the inherent balance of strategy and chance that accompanies such games. McDermott sees these games as layered metaphors, in this case as a stage for his characters to act out their dramas upon, but also by extension a representation of the stage we live our own lives on. Similarly, *The Planet on the Table*, a wood model of the gallery hand made by the artist, suggests the gallery itself as a stage, one representative of the world beyond it's walls, reminding us of our own potential as pawns within a larger game.

The subtext within McDermott's works is the acknowledgment of the complexity and messiness of our nature as human beings, calling on us to work against the increasing tendency to whitewash and simplify this complexity, and to, as someone once put it, have a bit of sympathy for the devil.

Dave McDermott

Dave McDermott (1974, Santa Cruz) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. In 2007 he completed his Master degree in Fine Art from the Parsons School of Design in New York. In that same year he received the Deans Scholar Award. In the recent years he has had solo exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, Brussels and Berlin.

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