

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition No. 2: Graham Walker Jackson Summerwell

Amanda Schmidt
Dirk Skreber, 2010

Friedrich Petzel Gallery is pleased to present in collaboration with Dirk Skreber *Exhibition no. 2*.

Exhibition no.2 is one of an unknown number of ongoing exhibitions at unknown locations. Over a decade ago I came across a centuries-old Chinese story about artists who, once they began to achieve fame and success, cut all ties with their names and took on new ones. Their desire to work under a new identity instead of basking in their fame and wealth impresses me immensely, and I have great respect for those who committed to this decision and its aftermath. The philosophical depth of this act is immeasurable. While I am in awe, however, I could never do it myself. The permanent consequences of such an undertaking, while certainly daunting, are not alone what would deter me.

What ultimately would prevent me is the emotionless discipline that is required to carry out such a deed, a discipline that is strange and incomprehensible to contemporary western civilization. Not knowing the story's origin makes it even more fascinating to take a close look at its fundamental meaning. Upon analysis, it soon becomes clear that the values and actions of artists who did this are quite out of sync with those of most artists living in the western hemisphere; the former desire independence and freedom, while the latter accept their dependence on the market and wealth.

Those that did this subordinated the ego to humility in an act of self-abandonment to artistic dignity and, more often than not, poverty. For the others, however, the ego is the point and the art itself becomes beside the point. Those who did this are constantly building upon their will to concentrate on the thing – the ideas, the work, the practice – and on nothing else. For the others, success and decadence diffuse artistic practice and dedication, and they consequently remain submissive to the power and allure of the market.

Jonathan Meese is one of the only young artists today who is addressing humility and who talks about art as being something larger than the artist.

He interprets art as an undoubted but indescribable entity that uses the artist as a medium through which to emerge.

John Frankenheimer's *Seconds* is an exemplary depiction of characters struggling with this same notion. In it, a middle aged man (John Randolph) buys a new identity from a dubious agency, which includes a new face and different body. He wakes up as Rock Hudson living as a painter in a neighborhood resembling The Hamptons of Long Island. The agency takes care of all aspects of his production process. His neighbors do what he did as well. Incapable of adjusting to his new life, he tries to get another identity with the help of the agency. He has already broken his contract, however, by visiting his former house and speaking to his former wife, and the agency therefore decides to off him.

In both stories, the consequence is to become unable to talk about your past or who you have been and I could never go that far.

Exhibition No. 2 examines the impossibility of this experiment: If executed, you can't ever talk about it because it's part of the experiment not to.

The exhibition will open on Saturday, April 3, with an opening reception from 6-8 pm, and will be on view through May 1, 2010. Friedrich Petzel Gallery is located at 535 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011. For more information, please contact the gallery at 212.680.9467 or info@petzel.com.