

Press Release

MICHAEL KREBBER

London Condom

17 November – 21 December 2007

private view: Saturday 17 November 6.00 - 8.00 pm

Describing Montgomery Clift's performance in *Red River*, the film critic Manny Farber opposed the delicate languor of this actor's "stances and kneelings and snake-quick gunmanship" to John Wayne's "claylike" and immobile business of barking his way through the film. It is a story about a massive cattle drive across the wilderness, the birth of an empire in the desert, and we can easily imagine the hypersensitive actor lying alone in his tent at the end of another day of shooting, burying his head in a pillow to muffle the sounds of Wayne and the director Hawks boozing it up and hollering like good old boys in the background. Montgomery Clift in his first film role. His first and last "nonmush performance". How will he get through it?

Like paintings, cattle must be driven to market. Crossing a river into unknown parts, these meaty properties are threatened not only by Cherokees and rustlers, but by the oedipal tensions of the men who drive them. At one point, in the middle of the night, a young man attempts to steal some sugar from the communal canteen, knocking over some pots and pans and causing the nervous animals to stampede. For once, everyone shuts up in the panic. Before all of this, we saw the men brand the cattle with hot irons. A lesson in value production as the adopted son Clift watches Wayne plant his bossy, company initials on an expropriated steer. The entire plot hinges on moving this property East, where it will finally be cashed in. In order to arrive at this possibility of exchange, the men must of course sublimate some primitive emotions.

What is the difference between a drive and a stampede? In purely kinetic terms, a drive that crosses a certain speed limit dissolves into panic and death. Or, from a dramatic point of view, problems between fathers and sons, and between men and women, can also put the drive at risk. Clift's job is not to kill the bad father but to produce the possibility of his return as good, or neutral. The father would never give up his autocratic cruelty without the son first assuring him that nothing will be disrespected or wasted if he does. At the end, it is Tess who does the shooting. Wounding Wayne in the leg, she has a mocking way of disowning the rifle afterwards, making the property strange again: "it isn't mine, it's his." Earlier, Wayne had instructed her that the drive was "too much for a woman".

A rambling lecture about the problem of calling oneself a painter today, originally delivered in Cologne. This talk has been transcribed by a hired, commercial sign painter onto 90 canvases, over screen-prints of old comic books. A solution to the other, equally pressing problem of producing three gallery shows at once, by actually filling these spaces with works. Cologne, Paris and London. Round 'em up, head 'em out. A drive or a stampede of painting, with all the psychic subtexts and the "hard, clamped down" performance of Michael Krebber, in this debut at Maureen Paley. Respekt Frischlinge, frischlinge gestrichen!

Matthew Garth (Montgomery Clift)

Ext. Desert Night:

While John Wayne and Howard Hawks celebrate another day of shooting with manly bonding, poker and whisky shots, Montgomery Clift lies alone in his tent. Assholes. This is his first film job.

John Kelsey

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For further information please contact Katie Guggenheim – katie@maureenpaley.com

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Maureen Paley is pleased to present a new series of paintings by Michael Krebber in his second solo exhibition at the gallery. He is a central figure in the Köln art scene, and has worked closely with Martin Kippenberger, Albert Oehlen, Cosima von Bonin and Kai Althoff since the 1980s

Krebber has a conceptual approach to painting that questions the roots of the medium. He works both with and against the conventions of painting, in a practice imbued with ambivalence, provocation, adamancy and feigned gesture. His work is marked by its multifaceted vocabulary: the rejection and reclamation of pictorial qualities, exploration of the limits of the picture plane and the tension between representation and abstraction. This position resonates with a reflection on the history of the medium. "How figuration and background, form and format, surface and space, colour and relief, the frame and the wall, object and environment, light and setting, materials and references, title and context, original and found material, can each relate to one another."

"I do not believe I can invent something new in art or painting because whatever I would want to invent already exists." Rather than focus on innovation, Krebber's restrained brush strokes leave the canvas open and full of possibilities. Like an unfinished sentence, his works allow the viewer to guess what might happen next.

Respekt Frischlinge is the final instalment of an exhibition in three parts; the first took place at Galerie Daniel Buchholz in Köln, and the second in Paris at Galerie Chantal Crousel. Krebber has used the publication that accompanied the exhibition he curated at Portikus in Frankfurt as his starting point for this new body of work. Each canvas represents one page from the book, and as a conclusion to this series of exhibitions, images of the work will be reassembled in a new publication.

Recent solo exhibitions have included: *Je suis la chaise*, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2007; *Respekt Frischlinge*, Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Köln, 2007; *sometimes it snows in april*, presentation with Rachel Harrison, The McAllister Institute, New York, 2006; *Connecting Hollywood with Sugar*, Greene Naftali Gallery, New York, 2006; *Secession*, Vienna, 2005; *Apothekerman*, Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany, 2000. His work has also been included in *Conditions of Display*, The Moore Space, Miami, 2007; *Grey Flags*, Sculpture Centre, New York, 2006; *The Most Contemporary Picture Show, Actually*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Germany, 2006; *Make Your Own Life: Artists In and Out of Cologne*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, 2006; *Formalismus*, Kunstverein Hamburg, Germany, 2004.

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