

PAUL BRANCA: 25% CATS + STUDIO VISITS (AFTER, AFTER BALTHUS)



JOAN presents *25% Cats + Studio Visits (after, after Balthus)* a selection of works by Paul Branca.

It started at a library, a day job, where Branca had been asked to research a specific work by the painter Balthasar Klossowski de Rola, commonly known as Balthus. He diligently pulled all the heaviest catalogs from the B section. They came cascading

down upon him, he drowns. No, that's not true. He, um, pulls all the Balthus books off the shelves and gets to work - incessantly flipping in order to find the specific work in question. At full tilt, he becomes distracted by the awkwardness of Balthus' work. Pages and pages of surreal paintings with odd figural compositions, often of children, strange objects and devilish cats. For several days he slowly turned these pages - hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands - these visual impressions burn, impregnating their ghost images onto his eyes.

Over the course of 24 hours in 2012, Branca invited 24 friends to a series of one-hour studio visits starting at midnight. The visitors were each asked to choose a single painting and spend time with it as a private act of viewing. Each painting depicted a cat alongside an hourglass, the colors varied widely but all had the same general composition which Branca culled from a detail of the work nicknamed *Le roi des chats* (The King of Cats), 1935, by Balthus. Branca's works were made by first painting the cat then using the left-over paint to fill the graphic hourglass alongside. Each painting was named after the visitor who had chosen it, including the curator's work *Summer*, 8am. Branca's project was complete when the 24th visitor came to discuss and name the last remaining cat. At JOAN, we present a selection of these paintings alongside new work.

$$\frac{6 \text{ cats}}{24 \text{ cats}} \leq \frac{24 \text{ cats}}{24 \text{ studio visits}} = (\text{old work}) +$$

certain considerations on how to install @ JOAN

= *show*

Paul Branca, b. 1974 Bronx, NY, lives and works in New York. He received his MFA in painting from the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York. Branca's work has been exhibited at The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn; Galerie Frankfurt am Main, Berlin; The Kitchen, New York; Sculpture Center, New York; Anat Ebgi/The Company, Los Angeles; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Berlin; Golden Parachutes, Berlin; Galeria Sabot, Cluj, Romania; and Galerie West, The Hague, Netherlands, among others. His work has been featured in Artforum.com, Modern Painters, The New York Observer, Art in America, Art Papers, Flash Art International, and Fillip. In November he will present a solo exhibition titled burro e salvia at Giorgio Galotti in Turin, Italy.

All images, installation view of Paul Branca, "25% Cats + Studio Visits (after, after Balthus)," JOAN, Los Angeles, Photo by Joshua White.