

Richard Telles presents an exhibition of new work by Dan Finsel, his first solo exhibition with the gallery. The installation features mandala paintings, large-scale photographs on which paint was applied, and three table-like sculptures, among other works, all of whose details feature a vocabulary of symbols intertwined by Finsel's internal logic. He developed this symbology while performing the exercises described in the book *The Inward Journey / Art as Therapy for You* by Margaret Frings Keyes (1974), which was found in his parents' book collection. Finsel's new body of work departs from his last in surface content but continues to employ an interpretation of method acting techniques to inhabit hidden aspects of himself. In doing so, he undergoes almost "extreme" subjective altering processes. By displacing his current self, he grafts "logically" determined psychological attributes/motives—depending on the reference material—to his thinking. Thus by determining the psychology of a subject "who would create this work", Finsel sees not only the elements of his performance as furthering an intended motive of meta-narrative and authorial play, but allows, in retrospect, for access to recesses of self that until now were previously unknown.

Upon entering the gallery space, the viewer is confronted with a painted pattern on the gallery's large closet doors behind the front desk. Having been appropriated from the cover of *The Inward Journey*, Finsel foreshadows the gallery space as a physical infiltration of the book itself, albeit with different images and objects inside. Three table-like sculptures are on view in the main gallery: each has arrangements of five clay forms perched on top, all of which represent an immediate "family" member. In turn, each discrete sculpture represents a particular developmental stage in Finsel's life: the mahogany piece as his pre-pubescence, the black piece as his adolescence, and the white one as his adulthood. For instance, the black table's tray full of black ink, whose opaqueness reminds of Rorschach blots and the mucky dramas of the teenage years contrasts with the white and relatively serene representation of his adulthood. The symbology of these works is not limited to their colors as well: the legs of each sculpture conjure particularities of each developmental stage by virtue of their shapes. The mahogany sculpture's raw and square wood legs connote the unformed or unfinished state of pre-pubescence, for example. And each developmental unit could also be read in reverse. The mahogany sculpture could be seen as the last stage in a circular, never-ending progression.=

The clay forms on the sculptures then recur in the 4 large-format photographs, also in the main gallery, in which Finsel's body becomes a replacement for one form or another, inhabiting the various roles of the family relationship. The pattern seen upon entering the exhibition was hand-painted on his body in each image, infiltrating the book on to his body and its performance. These patterns then morph into the mandala paintings, whose similar-keyed colors place each of the 5 filial forms in different configurations. While similar to the aesthetics of 1970's 'self-awareness'

techniques and Eastern art practices, they are for Finsel systematic and methodical. This search can also be located in the somewhat diagrammatic and holistic approach of Finsel's "Self-box 2", which features images of gem stones—taken from a calendar made the year of his parent's marriage—and an image of presumably Finsel himself. However, verifying this becomes difficult due to his face being hollowed out with an image of ancient mummies. No matter, the face is actually a representation of his archetypal 'shadow self' taken from a teen magazine.

This piece, along with the smaller prints that line the walls of the Martel space, mark their function as delicate codas to Finsel's dense, multi-valent practice. Their immediate significations, at the end, remain fugitive. Notably, Pig Latin has been used in place of English titles for all the works in the exhibition for the exception of the "Self-Box" and the smaller photographs in the Martel space. While essentially a language game of alterations, meant to conceal meanings to those unfamiliar with its rules, an assumption lies in the speaker that his or her lingual disguise is easily understood. However, this first decoding, like the many that follow, is perpetually the first step.

Dan Finsel was recently included in "Made in L.A." at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles in 2012, and recently held a solo presentation at Artist Films International at Ballroom Marfa, Texas, and at Whitechapel Gallery London, in 2012. Finsel also held a solo exhibition at Parker Jones Gallery, Los Angeles in 2010. He also has participated in group exhibitions at Francois Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles and Clifton Benevento, New York in 2011, and most recently, had work screened at the ICA, London in 2013. Finsel lives and works in Los Angeles.

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