

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening on Sunday, May 21st, of *Model as Painting*, Pieter Schoolwerth's sixth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will be held at both our 88 Eldridge and 36 Orchard Street locations.

One of the clear characteristics of our digital age is that in it all things, bodies even are generally suspended from their material substance. This increasingly spectral state of affairs is the effect of mostly invisible forces of abstraction that can be associated with the digitization of more and more aspects of experience. We as living beings are now confronting a structural split between the substance of things and their virtual double. To speak concretely, one can point to everyday phenomena such as coffee without caffeine, or food without fat, for example, but also to money without currency, love without bodies, and soon following, to painting without painting, and art without art...

In *Model as Painting*, Pieter Schoolwerth attempts to reverse the above described techno-cultural trend by producing a series of 'in the last instance' paintings, in which the stuff of paint itself reappears at the very end only of a complex, multi-media effort to produce a figurative picture. As such, paint here is not immediately used to build up an image from the ground up, if you will, one brush stroke at a time, but rather it arrives only to mark the painting after it has been fully formed and output onto canvas. In other words, one can safely claim that painting without painting has transformed into painting with painting in the last instance – with paint having been liberated from its traditional depictive and expressive functions for the first time, and therefore having become truly equal to itself, that is existing as pure excess, or ornament.

A sequel to the artist's exhibition of the same title at Capitain Petzel in Berlin earlier this year, this new iteration of the project continues to conflate the shallowness of digital space with the flatness of modernist painting and the individual layers of relief sculpture. Here again Schoolwerth asserts that photography, drawing, the construction of sculptural reliefs, digital image processing, printing, and, finally, painting, all contribute to propose a contemporary definition of painting.

An expanded version of *The Casting Agent*, a film produced in collaboration with Alexandra Lerman, plays a central role in the installation of the various works in the show. An allegory for the pictorial processes implicit in the paintings, where one of the characters plays a 'casting agent,' a stand-in for the artist, while the other plays a 'model,' who, while being photographed, casts shadows that create openings in the flat sets behind that allow the characters to transgress the screen and puncture the two-dimensional picture pla

This new ‘model’ that Schoolwerth proposes finds further physical form in his series of multi-layered relief works, representational tableaux in which figures overlap with one another, simultaneously projecting out from the surface and recessing into the constitutive layers. Initially carved by hand in foam core, and then photographed and used in the digitally processed image that precedes the moment of painting, the models are then produced again this time in wood with a CNC router to complete the layered process. These three-dimensional versions of the paintings can be said to depict, and yet reverse the compression of time and space that is intrinsic to digital communications, challenging the illusion of a ‘dematerialized’ space in favor of a materialist view that is anchored in human labor.

*The Casting Agent*, 2017

HD video, sound, 6:35 min. loop

Created by Pieter Schoolwerth

Directed, photographed, and edited by Alexandra Lerman

Produced by Pieter Schoolwerth and Alexandra Lerman

Performances by Patrick Sarmiento and Pieter Schoolwerth

Sound design and music by Soren Roi

Set construction by Alexander Carver

Special effects by Maria Beliaeva and Denis Chernobaiev

Pieter Schoolwerth was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1970. He lives and works in New York. Since receiving his BFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 1994, he has exhibited internationally with notable solo shows at Thread Waxing Space, Greene Naftali, American Fine Arts Co., Elizabeth Dee Gallery, and Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York. His work has been included in group exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Centre Pompidou, Paris, The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 303 Gallery, Gavin Brown’s enterprise, and Friedrich Petzel, New York, and is in the permanent collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Denver Art Museum, and the Phoenix Art Musuem. His fourth one-person exhibition at the gallery, *After Troy*, was followed by *Shadows Past* at Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels in 2013. In 2014, Schoolwerth had solo shows at What Pipeline, Detroit; Gallery SKE, New Delhi, India; and a two-person exhibition with Jonathan Lasker at Galeria Marta Cervera, Madrid. His fifth one-person exhibition at Miguel Abreu Gallery, *Your Vacuum Blows, which Sucks*, took place in the winter 2015. In January 2017, he had his first solo exhibition at Capitain Petzel, Berlin.

From 2003 to 2013, Schoolwerth ran Wierd Records and the Wierd Party at Home Sweet Home on

the LES of NYC. Wierd released music by 42 bands working in the genres of minimal electronics, coldwave and noise, and produced over 500 live music, dj, and performance art events internationally ([www.wierdrecords.com](http://www.wierdrecords.com)).

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