

"days of oil and gas"
WITH

AMIR CHASSON

PRIVATE VIEW 27th of June 2013
6:30 – 9:00PM

28th of June – 27th of July 2013

Kristin Hjellegjerde | ArtEco Gallery, London, is proud to present the solo exhibition *days of oil and gas*, featuring a large-scale installation by Amir Chasson. Running from 28th June to 27th July, Chasson's centerpiece, an 18-metre-long canvas, will wind around the gallery like a slumbering leviathan, embracing walls and cutting the space in half, transcending its two-dimensional presence to expand into and occupy the gallery space.

The gargantuan painting that comprises *days of oil and gas* is both a traditional panoramic work and a site-specific installation, created to fit the exact measurements of the gallery. The painting shows a group of corporate executives sitting at a conference table. But it is so large that it is hard to take in: the viewer must circle the space to comprehend it. Inevitably, you wonder who these people are. But for Chasson, the faces have no intrinsic meaning: they are composites made from randomly-selected images.

"What is more important to me than the subject matter is the idea of this huge work being forced into a small space. I wanted to give a sense of a painting that has leapt off the wall and grown to monstrous proportions, to completely dominate the gallery. So much so, in fact, that it leaves you almost no room to move. Unlike a painting on a wall, silent and contained, this is an aggressive work that intrudes on you, invades your space and will not be ignored."

The rough, unfinished reverse side of the canvas also cannot be ignored: it is very purposefully left on full display. This interplay between front and back was a prominent feature of Chasson's last solo show, *My French Nurse's Dream* (Outpost Gallery, Norwich, August 2012), in which the "backstage" aspect of the work was just as important as what was "onstage". Chasson is intrigued by the idea of peeking behind the theatre curtains to see how the illusion is constructed. "What happens if you go behind the scenes of a puppet theatre?" he asks. "On one level, it can be disappointing to see how it all works. But it can also provide another way to view the work."

In this context, the faces in the paintings are like puppets in a puppet show, with no insight into the strings and winches hiding in the wings, behind the curtains, that animate them. The faces are also another aspect of the interplay between front and back. Chasson sees the face as a veneer that ultimately betrays what lies beneath

– "the neuroses that always come to the surface, whether through a skin rash or a sad, longing gaze". The wrinkled surface of the raw, fleshy canvas, exposed on both sides as the viewer circumnavigates the work, can also be seen as a kind of skin.

The installation of the main piece acts as a focal point creating a sense of discomfort, challenging the viewer to look deeper, the very presence of the painting cutting across fields of vision, its great size coiled like a spring stuffed into a box, or a square peg into a round hole – at once a serious miscalculation of space and dimensions, and a carefully-planned interplay of presence and non-presence, both obstructing and revealing.

***days of oil and gas* runs from 28th of June – 27th of July 2013
at ArtEco Gallery, London**

Information for journalists:

Amir Chasson

Born in Israel, British artist Amir Chasson received his MFA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths University, London, in 2010, preceded by an MA in Design from Middlesex University in 2007. Previous exhibitions have included a solo show at Outpost, Norwich and *manmadegod* at Kristin Hjellegjerde | ArtEco Gallery, both in 2012. Chasson has won numerous awards, including The Abbey Award for a Fellowship at The British School at Rome (2012). His work was twice selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries (2009 and 2010). Chasson's work can be found in private and public collections, including Goldsmiths College and Saatchi Gallery in London, where it is currently on view as part of *New Order: British Art Today* running until 29 September 2013. For more information, visit www.amirchasson.com.

ArtEco Gallery

ArtEco Gallery is the conceptual extension of Kristin Hjellegjerde's art blog, ArtEco, serving as a creative outlet following its success. After moving from New York to London, Hjellegjerde decided to establish the gallery in south west London in order to offer a fresh outlook for contemporary art in this part of the city. Based in Old York Road, the gallery seeks to showcase both emerging and established contemporary artists from a range of backgrounds in an intimate and personal environment. Previous exhibitions include the inaugural *After Munch*, as well as *manmadegod*, *Encounter*, *Chromatic*, *Four Seasons* and solo shows of artists such as Daniele Tamagni. For more information, visit www.artecogallery.com.

For further information and high-resolution images, please contact Kristin Hjellegjerde at khjellegjerde@mac.com.