

GALERIE MARIA BERNHEIM

TUNGUSKA

INAUGURAL EXHIBITION

18 DECEMBER 2015 - 13 FEBRUARY 2016

PRESS RELEASE



Opening Friday December 18th, 2015
December 19th, 2015 - February 13th, 2016

Mitchell Anderson
Manuel Burgener
Miriam Laura Leonardi
Nick Oberthaler
Jon Rafman
Denis Savary
Ramaya Tegegne

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"One and the same civilization produces simultaneously two such different things as a poem by T. S. Eliot and a Tin Pan Alley song, or a painting by Braque and a Saturday Evening Post cover. All four are on the order of culture, and ostensibly, parts of the same culture and products of the same society.

A poem by Eliot and a poem by Eddie Guest -- what perspective of culture is large enough to enable us to situate them in an enlightening relation to each other? Does the fact that a disparity such as this within the frame of a single cultural tradition, which is and has been taken for granted -- does this fact indicate that the disparity is a part of the natural order of things? Or is it something entirely new, and particular to our age?"

Clement Greenberg, *Avant Garde & Kitsch*, The Partisan Review, 1939

The inaugural exhibition at Galerie Maria Bernheim will attempt at questioning the new order of experiences provided by different paths and visions of artists from a wide spectrum of artistic practices.

These artistic practices and the evolution of art history over the past decades have made it increasingly difficult to assume anything and yet the experience of viewing art demands more and more basic references to be known or to be googled in order to be understood or at least to provide an interaction. By giving multiple meanings and set of references to what is widely considered as Kitsch, the artists create a "reflected" effect. One that is even deeper and multi layered because the images displayed give the illusion of "prémâché" and yet cannot be fully understood only through the lens of mass culture. The first visual interface has actually often taken a sugar coated visually stimulating aspect, as if to be able to cater to the beholder's eye, addicted to an imagery that had originally taken its codes from what was considered high art. In order to convey ideas and concepts, the artist is using a visual vocabulary that elaborates on sets of references considered "universal" in a world of relativity, yet simultaneously he is no longer able to estimate the

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response of his audience to the symbols and references with which he works.

As Greenberg put it; in the past such a state of affairs has usually resolved itself into a motionless Alexandrianism, an academicism in which the really important issues are left untouched because they involve controversy, and in which creative activity dwindles to virtuosity in the small details of form, all larger questions being decided by the precedent of the old masters.

The exhibition Tunguska is looking to display the range of advancing practices, which refuse the vocabulary of the Neo Baroque and provide an endless quest to new verities, a historical criticism that denies the status quo, which no longer allows for judgments of value.

We are left to ponder what connects aesthetics so widely disparate and yet produced with the same set of references, the same low-brow suggestions, the same email chains, the same sources of information, the same memes, the same Google Images. Yet we come to an appreciation that the Avant-Garde is not timid, and less and less relying on its audience.

There is simply a choice between the bad, up-to-date old and the genuinely new.

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