

Nicolas Party: Works on Paper

London, March 26th, 2024 - Baldwin Contemporary is pleased to showcase a curated selection of works on paper by Swiss born contemporary painter and sculptor Nicolas Party (b.1980). Taking works from 2008 – 2017, a key period of development in Party's oeuvre, whilst the works are unified by their shared use of paper as support, there is a wide diversity in their subject matter, medium and technique, demonstrating the artist's broad interests in the possibilities of painting and drawing.

The exhibition brings together a captivating selection of small-scale pictures (the largest is 42 cm wide, the smallest barely 8 cm tall), spanning a decade of work on paper made in parallel to Party's larger works on linen, murals and his painted sculptures. The chosen works employ a variety of media including watercolour, ink, graphite, pastel, gold leaf, and in one work, 2012's 'Elephant', the paper itself is folded to form a freestanding construction. Along with this elephant, Party depicts a range of life forms, large and small, from a dainty bunch of flowers to a towering pine, there are two snakes and an oyster (the latter deceased, and served ready to eat), and most numerous here are Party's female nudes posed on a variety of stages and platforms, performing unusual actions and poses, some involving the transfer of fluids from one vessel to another.

There is an intimacy and immediacy running throughout the current paintings and drawings. The no-going-back practicalities of mark making on a pristine page give the viewer a clear impression of each picture as an accumulation of decisions made with nowhere to hide. Whilst many of these works have the spontaneity and lightness of touch typical of a sketch made with the paper resting on a desk, or balanced on one knee, it is not in Party's nature to make anything that would fit the description 'rough'. As such, he finds ways to elevate even the smallest pencil drawing to the status of Fine Art, for example, by drawing frames and ornamental forms around his central images. This determined tendency toward framing is, perhaps, an expression of Party's more general interest in the art of presentation; something which he often makes manifest in exhibitions of his work, in the form of temporary murals, unusual wall colourings and architectural interventions.

Genre conventions abound in Party's work, and although never entirely straight forward, the works collected here can be classified with some confidence: a nude, a Still Life, a landscape, and so on. Within these conventions Party finds the freedom to experiment, playing affectionately and inventively with the mechanics and symbolic potential of picture making. Over the years, Party has evolved a visual language recognisably his own – what we might once have called a 'signature style' – but nevertheless every line and form is also richly invested with influences from art's long history, a quality that Party does not seek to disguise. Regarding his relationship with art of the past, Party says:

"I love looking at paintings from all sort of periods. I'm fascinated by how an almost 2,000-year-old mosaic of an unswept floor can provoke joy and stimulate me. When you look at an artwork from the past, you feel that time becomes much more elastic. Time and history become a "zone" where you can travel. A simple melody that was written 600 years ago can still be as fresh as when it was created. When you hear that melody, you feel that time is not an absolute value."

About Nicolas Party

Born in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1980, Party has gained international recognition for his unique style that combines elements of surrealism, abstraction and figuration. His art spans various mediums, including

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painting, drawing, and sculptural installations. Party's subject matter often includes portraits, landscapes, and still life, but he approaches these traditional genres with a fresh and modern perspective.

Party uses bright, playful colors that connect his work to Expressionism and Fauvism, and creates immersive environments for his exhibitions that tap into both the new and the familiar. Early in his career, Party worked as a 3D animator. This digital work influenced his later paintings because, as Party explains, "*we're so used to seeing computer-generated images now that it has a big impact on how we see all images. I think this describes the look my figures have. I see them almost as like a thin layer of something and I don't know what is behind them.*"

Party received his MA from the Glasgow School of Art in 2009, and has since had solo exhibitions around the world, including at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in DC, the Dallas Museum of Art, and M WOODS in Beijing.

About Baldwin Contemporary

Baldwin Contemporary is a London-based gallery specializing in modern and contemporary works of art. The gallery typically focuses on those artists united through their conceptual diligence, quality and historical significance and with demonstrable museum, institutional, curatorial and secondary market momentum.

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