

THE ECHO'S DECAY

A solo exhibition by Jake Scharbach

Exhibition: Oct. 14 – Nov. 5, 2016

Reception: Friday, Oct. 14, from 6PM - 9PM

Brilliant Champions Gallery is proud to present **THE ECHO'S DECAY**, an exhibition of new works by Jake Scharbach. As the artist's fifth solo exhibition in New York, **THE ECHO'S DECAY** includes a selection of paintings representative of the artist's richly complex content and visual imagery. In Scharbach's hands, our society is under thorough scrutiny as he raises unexpected comparisons that span the millennia of western civilization.

Scharbach sees his subject matter as an echo. A reverberating sound. A repeated pattern steadily diminishing. He looks at recurring themes of violence and historical artifacts from past empires, drawing clear parallels between civilization's decline and the imminent decay of an echo.

Where does the artist's concern come from? His personal upbringing can hardly be left out of the discussion. Scharbach comes from a small town in Washington State, a close-knit community. Cabin hand-built by his father, clothes sewn by his mother, and kerosene lanterns instead of electricity. The environment of his youth shaped his views on human connection—a connection, he says, that modern-day society is lacking. The artist's good friend Francisco Peralta says it perfectly:

"If you carry with you endless hours of rain, wind, wet earth, dead time, there's a possibility that you will become suspicious of civilization and dedicate yourself to creating images that corrode and subvert it."

Scharbach thinks and works in the midst of disillusionment. However, the result of his relentless searching and questioning is a much-needed opportunity for the critical thinker in us all to examine our mounting anxieties for the future and to reassess that which we value in this life.

Jake Scharbach earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Pacific Northwest College of Art. His most recent solo exhibitions include MAC Quinta Normal (Santiago, Chile), and Microscope Gallery (NY). He has been exhibited at numerous other locations including the Brooklyn Art Museum, the Armory Show, Vala Gallery (Santiago, Chile), Court Square Studios (NY), and Kokoothe Art Space (OH). He has been awarded the Royal Nebeker Notable Artist Award as well as the Newport Visual Arts Center Scholarship and the Pacific Northwest College of Art Scholarship.

Artist statement:

"Growing up in a small town in Washington State the intimacy of community shaped my understanding of unconditional relationships and how these relationships can go beyond social, political and economic status. This particular geography also developed in me an early connection to nature that informed my ongoing suspicions of civilization. My work consequently focuses on the materialization of symbols and signs, through an exercise of comparison, to analyze contemporary cultural values. I try to confront the civic intention behind classical art while defining an imagery of modern icons to talk about the failures and fictions of our society.

Formally, my work is an exercise in painting, as it carefully considers that every minor detail of the resulting object has been thoroughly disassembled, inspected, and laid bare. Influenced by the history of representation and hyperrealism I follow the steps of American masters to question the medium itself, substituting the visual for ideological observation.

My intention is to generate a series of conflicts that implicate a drifting social consensus of the very notions of history-making, by analyzing divisions between modern and historical artifacts in search of the social conditioning that defines us."

For questions or inquiries please email jillian@brilliantchampions.com or call (646) 543-9591.

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Previous Press

FICTIONAL ARCHEOLOGY

- MAC, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Santiago

To talk about Jake Scharbach's work it is necessary to take into account certain questions pertaining to memory that function as pillars of his pictorial work. On one hand it is necessary to speak of the dichotomy between the "new" and "old" continents when it comes to generating memory, a dichotomy that is best understood when bringing classicism face to face with modernity, likewise revealing a meeting point at the "westernness" of both continents, reflected in their insistence on an empirical form of memory legitimized by objects.

On the other hand, in this feverish obsession for the generation of objects--to which the arts are a grand accomplice--there also exists clear differences, considering that on the one side these objects are erected as commemorative monuments while on the other they are commemorated as monumentalized objects. These questions serve as an introduction to the works comprising the exhibition *Fictional Archeology*, permitting us to contemplate Scharbach's work beyond the reductionist topics of American hyper-realism.

Although archeology investigates physical changes of extinct societies, in the imposing large and medium format paintings of this exposition we find ourselves within an "archeological" practice for a society that, for Scharbach, is in the process of extinction. Established in these exercises is a series of comparative studies in which monuments of art history including *The Massacre of the Innocents* by Rubens, the frescoes of the house of Joseph II in Pompeii, or the Giambologna's sculpture *Hercules and the Centaur Nessus*, are confronted with images of highway traffic jams, car wrecks, and police violence in Santiago during protests against Pinochet, putting face to face the implicit civics in monuments of classical art with the imaginary of modern icons.

Influenced by the history of representation and hyperrealism, Scharbach transcends the masters of American painting, substituting visual observation for the ideological, seeking to unravel the meaning of contemporary cultural values in order to discuss the failures and fictions of our society. Presented in the exhibition is a series of contrasts that deconstruct current consensus, analyzing diverse images and artifacts in order to bring to light the social conditioning that defines us.

In this exhibition, his first individual outside the United States, Scharbach transforms painting into evidence of an epochal juxtaposition, at the same time challenging the pictorial traditions of representation.

JAKE SCHAFBACH

Written by Francisco Peralta , April 2016

1. Jake grew up in Washington state. In the forest. Without electricity. No one chooses where they're born, but it's not an irrelevant piece of information and one has to acknowledge it.
2. Like inner demons or (one assumes) guardian angels, the place where you were born stays with you, or to put it another way, it follows you, stalks you, throughout your life. Whether you like it or not, part of you always lives in that place. Even when you're thousands of miles away.
3. If you carry with you endless hours of rain, wind, wet earth, dead time, there's a possibility that you will become suspicious of civilization and dedicate yourself to creating images that corrode and subvert it.
4. Martin Amis says an artist is (or should be) someone who is "harassed to the point of insanity by first principles."
5. Society, what we call society, is an arbitrary order. It's nothing more than one result of many possibilities. Yet we move according to that order as if it were the only one, denying ourselves the possibility of change, convincing ourselves that this is the only way to live.
6. Once that suspicion exists, there is no turning back. The idea emerges and begins to grow silently and ever faster, like cancer, or a snowball.
7. A pile of used tires. An investment fund. A mechanical crane. Why? Nothing that exists as a result of civilization has the right to exist; it's natural that it exists.
8. There are as many ways as radii that can be drawn from the center of a circle. That's what Thoreau said, I don't know if it was when he was in the forest, or before, or after.
9. Western history (including art) has followed a totalitarian and monolithic line, pre-quantum, ignoring the random nature of reality. But we know now that it is impossible to predict the future based on the past. Not completely.
10. Fortunately nature adapts indiscriminately to our weaknesses as well as to our strengths. And it always materializes to devour everything.

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Radio Station — Review <http://radio.uchile.cl/2016/05/31/en-el-mac-de-quinta-normal-se-exhibe-la-obra-del-estadounidense-jake-scharbach>

Artist statement in popular leftist publication in Chile — <http://www.theclinic.cl/2016/06/14/por-que-anarquia/>

University of Chile Review — <http://m.uchile.cl/mn122264>

An interview with me in an expat magazine in Santiago — <http://www.revistarevolver.cl/exhibits/fictional-archeology-mac>