

## PRESS RELEASE

*Italian Airs* May 19<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 2016

*Italian Airs* is a Pop Up show at Schema Projects which includes the work of Carrie Beckmann and Christophe Boulanger (made at the BAU Institute in Otranto), Melanie Parke and Richard Kooyman, (made in Rome at the American Academy).

As artists we are citizens of the world. Culture unites us and we absorb all that is local and new to us, each seeing with her own eyes; in fact, we go for that, a chance that something new will enter our work through the cracks. In this case, Italy, that great jutting peninsula on the Mediterranean, home to the earliest of cultures and thereafter, overrun by many of the great cultures of the world, each adding their tint to the ferment. Some of us just sit on a hill and absorb the beauty of the cultivated landscape, an olive tree, a cypress lined road, the rows of vines, some roses. Others marvel at the stacked stone walls, menhir in the fields, the blocks of Etruscan stone, rutted Roman roads, the mosaics of Byzantium, the Romanesque churches, castles and towers. Some of us perch ourselves over the bodies of clear blue seas or high mountain peaks filled with colorful wildflowers. And some of us go to encounter our favorite works of art, panel paintings, fresco cycles, masterworks of painting in dark churches, great sculpture in public piazzas. And we therefore encounter a lost part of ourselves: perhaps it was in the air. The Italian Airs.

**Thursday May 19th** -Opening 6-9 pm

**Friday May 20th**- Bushwick Summer Nights 6-9pm

**Saturday May 21th** -Open 1-6pm. Artists Talks 4pm. (info below)

**Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Open 1-6pm

**Monday May 23rd** Italian Wine with the Artists - Stop by the gallery and have a glass of Italian Wine with the Artists 6-8pm.

**Tuesday May 24<sup>th</sup>** 4-6pm

OR by appointment: 231-633-8772

### SATURDAY TALKS

Richard Kooyman will give a slide talk on "**Concepts of Beauty-Ancient and Modern**" (30minutes) research created during his Italian residencies that thread together contiguous concepts of beauty that radiate from ancient times into contemporary pulses that affect his work.

Melanie Parke will give a talk entitled "**Sapphic Diaspora**" (20 minutes) the title of her series of gouache paintings that evolved during her time as a Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome. The Sapphic Diaspora is a feminist inquiry that seeks to juxtapose imagery of ancient women, and most often the lack of them, with a climate and cultural consciousness in feminism in which exile, dispersal, and uncertainty of belonging continues to weigh down on the female body.

### ARTISTS STATEMENTS

Melanie Parke:

"What if Sappho" is a feminist inquiry realized through a series of figurative imagery in gouache on paper. Reassembling an envisioned legacy in which Sappho's poetry actually survived and thrived, I am riffing on motifs typically reserved for men by succeeding them with women. These drawings repurpose existing representations of women and most often the lack of them, from mosaics, frescos and sculpture in the ancient world. This project materialized during my time at the American Academy in Rome as a Visiting Artist, November 2015.

Richard Kooyman:

Through painting I explore what remains beautiful from the ancient Roman past.

The walls of the *Domus Aurea* or Augustus's *Ara Pacis* look nothing like they did in their day yet a beauty moves from these works forward through time. What ideals and concepts of beauty still radiate from these works of sculpture and paintings? Not only the style but the idea of beauty itself has evolved over years and begs the question- What aspect of these ancient aesthetics have endured?

By making paintings of Roman figures and the domestic landscape I'm attempting a type of visual archeology. I'm searching for classical ideas and forms of beauty which I am able to re-contextualized into my work.

Carrie Beckmann:

I work out of doors, whenever possible. I sit on the ground. I work on a flat sheet of paper, applying watercolors, with high pigment content using a brush. I tune into wherever I am, absorbed by the light and the landscape, and the sounds, smells, vegetation, people, animals, cuisine, of a place. I am an observer and an absorber and a wanderer and a traveller. My paintings are as much about the act of painting and paint as a material as they are about place. When I'm before that tree, I am intuitively exploring how it might be painted. Working outside I am also open to comments people make to me while I work. They say so much about what part of the world I am in be it Mumbai, Otranto, or Brooklyn.

Cristophe Boulanger:

In the south of Italy, at the tip of the boot, in Apulia - stones, land and hot weather - the age-old olive trees resist. On the side of the road stand the most beautiful ones, crumbling, twisted, hooked on life. They have seen everything, experienced everything, they are the ancestors. One no longer knows if these unique visages are vegetable or mineral.

I have chosen to uproot them, during the time of a residence in Otranto, to make them dance to the rhythm of the Taranta - local healing ritual - mixing music, trance, and devotion. I wanted to put the pieces back together, to repair, to patch, to graft them a heart, a pump of colors. They are "les tord boyaux", well-spirits.

Tout au sud de l'Italie, à la pointe de la botte, dans les pouilles - terres de cailloux et de canicule - résistent les oliviers séculaires. Au bord des routes se dressent les plus beaux, les croulants, les tordus, accrochés à la vie. Ils ont tout vu, tout vécu, ce sont les ancêtres. Chacun à une trogne unique dont on ne sait plus si elle tient du géologique ou du végétal. J'ai choisi de les déraciner, le temps d'une résidence d'été à Otrante, de les faire danser au rythme de la tarentelle - rituel de guérison local - mêlant musique, transe, et dévotion. J'ai eu envie de rassembler les morceaux, de réparer, de rafistoler, de leur greffer un coeur, une pompe à couleurs. Se sont les «tord boyaux».