

Press release



BFAS
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exposition / exhibition
JEU-VEN / THU-FRI 14h-18h30
SAM / SRT 11h-17h

bureaux / offices
LUN-VEN / MON-FRI 9h-12h30
14h-18h30

Press release

On 24 May 2007, for the upcoming opening of the "quARTier des Bains" in Geneva, BFAS Blondeau Fine Art Services will have the pleasure to present, on its premises at 5, rue de la Muse and in cooperation with Metro Pictures New York, a thematic exhibition by the American artist Jim Shaw entitled *Distorted Faces & Portraits, 1978-2007*.

Jim Shaw, born in Midland, Michigan in 1952, lives and works in Los Angeles. Part of the California scene along with Mike Kelley, Paul McCarthy and Raymond Pettibon, he draws his inspiration from the world of tales, the fantastic, religion and politics. Using various techniques such as painting, drawing, sculpture and collage, Jim Shaw depicts a decadent world with irony. He shows objects and human beings as they are, giving them a surreal dimension that weaves together premonitions, uncertainties, fears and dreams. Today, contemporary art lovers are familiar with his oneiric series *Dream Drawings/Dream Objects*.

All of the six black-and-white 183 by 122 cm pictures from the series *Distorted Faces*, painted between 1986 and 2007, will be shown. In addition to commissioned portraits, the series includes the two oil paintings of JFK and Ronald Reagan. Also on display are twenty-two works on paper from the same series, created between 1978 and 1985. Jim Shaw had the following to say about his work on *Distorted Faces*: "[...] the faces get weirder: they start off fairly simple and goofy looking and get more cubistic. I guess the drawings could be seen as a kind of violent treatment of the face. When I did my own face, I realized that I was actually being sadistic in the treatment of these faces." This series led to a book published by the author in 1986 and currently out of print, in which the drawings of distorted faces were arranged to resemble an issue of the American tabloid *The National Enquirer*.

We will also be showing 12 drawings from the series *Noir Portrait* (1978), primarily composed of portraits of Hollywood actors. In 1992, Jim Shaw did eight sketches characterized by breathtaking technique and precision for his series *Giant Face Paintings*, including the remarkable portrait of the artist Mike Kelley. Finally, two drawings from the series *Monster Face* (2006) provide examples of Jim Shaw's more recent work.

The exhibition will thus lead viewers through a portraits gallery of "ancestral figures", composed of faces that are sometimes realistic but often distorted and fragmented, which the artist uses in a grotesque dissection of human nature.

Jim Shaw's works have been widely seen at major art institutions in Europe and the US. For example, the public was able to see his narrative saga *My Mirage* (Biennale of the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, 1991), his personal collection of *Thrift Store Paintings* (Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2000) and his series based on a totally fictitious dogma entitled *O* (Magasin de Grenoble, 2003). His first major retrospective took place at the Casino du Luxembourg and at MAMCO in Geneva in 1999/2000.

We are especially happy to devote a first thematic exhibition with Jim Shaw's portraits. This would not have been possible without the help and generous support of private American and European collectors.

To accompany the exhibition, JRP-Ringier is publishing a 96-page catalogue reproducing the 50 works on display, most of which are shown in their actual size thanks to the large format (40 by 30 cm).

BFAS Blondeau Fine Arts Services moved to 5, rue de la Muse in Geneva in 2000. As a consultancy firm dealing with painting, drawing and sculpture from 1820 to now, BFAS Blondeau Fine Arts Services proposes major works to collectors and institutions in Europe and in the United States. The company benefits from an art library of 10 000 titles. Wishing to share its vision of contemporary and emerging art, BFAS Blondeau Fine Arts Services devotes its space called **5, rue de la Muse** to regular exhibitions. Among other important artists, Alex Brown, Louise Lawler, Dan McCarthy, Raymond Pettibon or Jim Shaw have been exhibited in the past.

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