

**Exhibition: “ENGBROX, *Hyperceptions*”**

*From 4 March to 30 May 2009*

*The VivoEquidem Gallery is presenting an exhibition of paintings by German-born artist Sylvester Engbrox.*

“Engbrox, *Hyperceptions*” will feature approximately 20 new works shown during successive exhibitions. This is the second show devoted to the artist; the first one took place at the gallery just a year ago. Sylvester Engbrox’s painting, figurative and anchored in today’s world, shows characters, often just partially clothed, moving through strange atmospheres. These figures and settings based on images from our daily lives (the popular press and Internet) or more personal references (Andy Warhol and the films of David Lynch) result in a reality reinvented by the artist. Engbrox makes no judgements or statements in his paintings, and that is where their strength lies; they are perfectly in tune with the digital era, where realities are many and polymorphous.

Engbrox was born in Cleves, Germany and moved to France in the mid-1980s. He began as a photographer, experimented with painting in the 1990s, headed an independent record label and returned to painting full-time three years ago. Nurtured by all those experiences, Engbrox offers us unclassifiable art you can discover at the VivoEquidem Gallery during a show that will travel to the Glasgow Art Fair in April.



Engbrox, *Katrin with Handbag*, 2008, oil on canvas, 180 x 140 cm

Engbrox, *Motorcyclers*, 2008, oil on canvas, 110 x 140 cm



Engbrox, *David Listening*, 2008, oil on canvas, 140 x 110 cm

The exhibition “**ENGBROX, *Hyperceptions***” will be presented from 4 March to 30 May 2009 at the VivoEquidem Gallery, 113, rue du Cherche-Midi, 75006 Paris  
 Tel.: +33 (0) 9 61 26 92 13  
 E-mail : [galerie@vivoequidem.net](mailto:galerie@vivoequidem.net)

**Opening times :**  
 Monday to Saturday  
 2 to 7:30pm and by appointment  
 Opening of the exhibition:  
 5 March from 7 to 10pm.

## Engbrox, Hyperceptions

By Max Torregrossa, January 2009

Those who had the opportunity to see Sylvester Engbrox's first exhibition in 2008 most certainly witnessed the genesis of an extraordinary artist. True, some of the paintings were over 10 years old but they had never been shown, and the proximity of these early works with those of 2005, 2006 and 2007 (the artist had stopped painting in the meantime) constituted the "primordial soup" of a world in formation. All the original building blocks were before our eyes and, to be completely honest, I was convinced we were witnessing an important moment.

Today Engbrox's world is expanding and in the 20 or so new paintings we will show at the VivoEquidem Gallery in several stages over a three-month period from 4 March to 30 May (with a stop at the Glasgow Art Fair in late April), we will see how his creativity has shifted from über-reality to über-perception.

Jean-Luc Chalumeau, who wrote the 2008 catalogue's preface, and I came to the same conclusion: Engbrox does not belong to any school but emanates directly from the contemporary world's complexity, bombarded with images, most of them digital. It might be said that this über-reality (sur/hyper-reality) is characterised by an absence of judgement and statements, despite a certain intentional realism. All his figures move around in strange environments that are sometimes hostile (the *Air Disaster* series), sometimes unsettling (*Pool 1* and *2*, *Moni*), and they are often only partially clothed. But a specific sense of anxiety, expectation or, although the women are often physically attractive and scantily clad, eroticism, can never be attributed to the images (in other words coming exclusively from them).

As the scene depicted became familiar to us, details gradually stood out and started attacking what the eye had just constructed. Anatomical inconsistencies, the setting's precise structure, a reflection or a space left strangely empty on the canvas eventually grew prominent in the eye of viewer, who found himself captive and became the image's third element, after the figures and the setting in which they moved. That is when the über-reality I talked about was put into place.

The fact that Engbrox belongs to the generation that grew up in Düsseldorf in the 1970s and 80s and received sound training as a photographer in Arles are obviously not without significance. For him, the visible world of his youth—from what remained of New Objectivity to the widely disseminated pictures of RAF actions to Gerhardt Richter's searing intensity—constituted a nurturing "foundation". Andy Warhol,

the films of David Lynch, the Bechers' photography and the music of Kraftwerk came on top of that.

Lastly, the "South", as Engbrox puts it (he actually means France, where he lives, and Greece, where he often goes), in contrast with the German "North", which mistrusts any act of seduction, completed the training of his special gaze.

Because of his German culture and training as a photographer, Engbrox has always been interested in a certain projection of reality, which he immediately called into question because that reality lied, deceived, tried to manipulate and, above all, wished to be seen as definitive. For years he has methodically compiled and filed tens of thousands of pictures from the popular press, television magazines and Internet; he quickly understood that the world within his perceptible realm certainly exists, but is not as real as people say or would have us believe. In the end, he observed and then accepted that *the world is the totality of facts and not of things*.<sup>1</sup>

The digital era that Engbrox practically grew up with and has closely followed confirmed that irrefutable fact. Digital technology—this is even its essence—forgets nothing, throws nothing away, ceaselessly accumulates all realities one after the other, and all of them are true, successively. Today technology enables us to find them again almost instantly, in their exact form, as they were initially proposed to us. In front of that multitude, we are forced to admit that there is no "original" truth, a doxa of reality. Most certainly the world can only be changed by it.

Engbrox may be one of the first artists whose gaze has adapted to this new horizon.

That is why his paintings bring us face-to-face with this über-perception, an over/hyper-perception that does not seem to overlook any point of view. Certain periods of Cubism had already done that spatially. It remained to be done on the higher level of awareness of the world. That is what Sylvester Engbrox does.

<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein in *Tractatus logico-Philosophicus* 1.1

### Press contact

Peggy Garinet

Tel. : 06 30 74 32 01

peggy.garinet@vivoequidem.net