

TANYA LEIGHTON

PRESS RELEASE

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AURÉLIEN GAMBONI - THE BIG PICTURE

2 May - 20 June 2009

Curated by Emilie Bujes

PREVIEW 1 May 2009, 6 to 9.30pm

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TANYA LEIGHTON GALLERY is pleased to present The Big Picture, the first solo exhibition by Swiss artist Aurélien Gamboni (b. 1979).

The Big Picture - its title drawn from the TV series produced by the U.S. Army in the 1950s and '60s - presents two new series of works that explore the act of revisiting ideas, systems, and models from the past to approach our present economic, social and political crisis and the accompanying 'crisis of meaning'. The first of the series, entitled Geister und Gespenster, is comprised of drawings that question re-appropriation strategies in contemporary art and 'revivalist' tendencies within culture more broadly. Gamboni layers image upon image creating patterns and figures in an accumulative fashion. The series title refers to Karl Marx's book of 1852, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, wherein he analyses how Napoleon III strategically built upon the ideological fantasy that his uncle Napoleon Bonaparte had left in the collective imagination. According to Marx, this attempt to revive the spirit (Geist) of a figure leads to the apparition of an agonising and hallucinatory spectre (Gespenst). Quoting Marx: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce." Drawing upon the inevitability of failure inherent in any restitution attempt - be it of a historical event or fictional character - Geister und Gespenster opens up a space to consider the spectral dimensions of figures and events within personal and collective memory.

Geister und Gespenster, depicting figures such as Gage (from Stephen King's Postmodern Gothic Pet Sematary), Madeleine (Hitchcock's allegorical figure from Vertigo), and Fala (Franklin D. Roosevelt's dog), segues into Gamboni's second series of works. This is an 'empty' structure, inspired by the significant exhibition designs such as the Independent Group's An Exhibit (1957). An Exhibit was conceived as a photographic exhibition without pictures, consisting simply of an arrangement of transparent panels in space. The artist reclaims and modifies this proposition of the empty framework, defacing the Perspex

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panels with graffiti-like text and sketches. Gamboni's structure stages and questions a 'battle of narrative', playing with binary oppositions common to art history: theory and practice; narrative and anti-narrative; discourse and experience.

Born in 1979, Aurélien Gamboni lives and works in Geneva, Switzerland. He was curator (with Kim Seob Boninsegni) of Forde - an independently-run art space in Geneva (2006 - 2008). Gamboni's work has been exhibited internationally including at Fragile Monumente (2009), Susie Q Projektraum, Zurich; Aurum, Centre PasquArt, Bienne, Switzerland (2008); Swiss Art Awards, Basel (2008); If It's A Bird, Shoot It!, Sculpture Center, New York (2008); Unter 30, CentrePasquArt, Bienne, Switzerland (2007); Berthoud, Lissignol-Chevalier and Galland Grants, Contemporary art center of Geneva (2007); Swiss Art Awards, Basel (2007) (recipient of the National Prize, Kiefer-Hablitzel Foundation).

With special thanks to Henriette Huldish, Eva Lütte, Hannah Munger and Penny Rafferty.

For further information and images please contact [info@tanyaleighton.com](mailto:info@tanyaleighton.com)  
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