

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERNET LARSEN: THREE CHAPTERS

SEPTEMBER 6 – OCTOBER 27, 2012

CHAPTER 1: HEADS AND BODIES (SEPT. 6 – 26)

CHAPTER 2: PLACES (SEPT. 27 – OCT. 10)

CHAPTER 3: NARRATIVES (OCT. 11 – 27)

Vogt Gallery is pleased to present Mernet Larsen's first gallery solo show in New York. The exhibition is divided in three chapters and introduces recent work interpolated with works from earlier periods in the artist's career. For the first time the full scope of Larsen's practice will be realized in New York.

Larsen is an accomplished painter who has always challenged herself to invent new styles and ways of composition. Her recent oeuvre marks a synopsis of previous works ranging between abstraction and figuration. Using modernist Russian constructivist paintings as a point of departure for numerous compositions, she also engages ideas of reverse perspective and conflicting vanishing points, as can be found in Japanese narrative scrolls. Her pool of inspirations is vast, ranging from masterpieces of Renaissance through 20th century art, to traditional Japanese puppet theatre, to photographs she has taken of classrooms and faculty meetings during her 35-year long Professorship in Florida.

Larsen's style of the past five years has the currency of a significantly younger painter with her astounding colors and refreshing immediacy. Her oeuvre spans several decades and has undergone numerous stylistic evolutions. From early figurative paintings, through apparent abstractions of the 80s and 90s, she is currently working in manner that can be called geometric figuration. Larsen insists that she has always tried to connect her images to what she has seen in real life.

Larsen's paintings have a constructed appeal that sometimes reminds of papier-coupé. In fact she often works with tracing paper cutouts that she paints on and then glues onto the canvas while leaving pencil marks of the underlying composition visible. Hard edges are juxtaposed with naturalistically painted features such as hands, ears, feet or tree trunks. The image presents itself in disorienting, even vertiginous perspective that sometimes distorts the figures. Still the compositions are not visually resolved with just one glance. It takes a closer look to fathom all elements and combine them.

The chapters of the show follow recurring themes in Larsen's work and juxtapose paintings of several decades. The harsh forms of the geometrized figures of her current works find themselves next to the hyper realistic style of the early 80s or the minimal variations of the 90s.

HEADS AND BODIES brings together works that show a close up of human expression in a condensed fashion. Titles like "Disagreement" or "Haunting" converse with stretched bodies as in "Dusk" and "Dawn". Postures and mimic diversity surprise in Larsen's rigorous style.

PLACES investigates the more complex compositions that depict locations both inside and outside. Larsen revisits Poussin or shows a group at dinner in a diner's booth. Whether the source of imagery is quotidian life or art history the painter brings vibrant vividness into her subjects.

NARRATIVES combines some of the most fascinating inventions of Larsen and shows the full spectrum of her use of perspective as well as treatment of subject matter. Stories can range from crime scenes as in "Mishap" to bizarre group configurations as in "Mall Event".

Mernet Larsen was born in 1940 in Houghton, Michigan and currently divides her time between New York City and Tampa, Florida. She is Professor Emeritus of painting at the University of South Florida, where she taught for 35 years, receiving the university's highest distinctions for teaching. Larsen has been the subject of over 25 solo exhibitions including the New York Studio School in 2005. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Ringling Museum of Art, St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts, Tampa Museum of Art, and numerous other public and private collections.

A comprehensive monograph on the work of Mernet Larsen is to be released in Spring 2013 and will feature a seminal, in-depth essay by John Yau.

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am - 6 pm and by appointment.

For further details including images please contact Fabian Bernal at Fabian@vogtgallery.com or at +1 212.255.2671