

JOHANNES VOGT

Walter Robinson, “Salad, Candles, & Money”

December 12 – January 26, 2018

Johannes Vogt Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition by the American artist **Walter Robinson**, his first with the gallery. Titled “Salad, Candles, and Money,” the show features three new paintings whose subjects are commonplace images that circulate aimlessly in the spectacular society, despite their omnipresence as indexes of desire. Robinson’s work has always been poised on a threshold between virtue and vice, whether via pulpish paintings of illicit romance or still-lifes of liquor on a shelf and cake on a plate. The new paintings enrich the carnal cosmology, so to speak, with emblems of good health, spirituality and commodity exchange. Invoking the senses of taste, smell and touch, at the same time these works are subtle comments on the avant-garde imagination that animates contemporary painting.

In “Joy’s Salad” (2018), the subject is unquestionably a healthy one, an implicit rebuke to the outlawry that characterizes much of the contemporary art impulse. The uncertain history of salad, which is fairly recent and perhaps most easily traced via period menus, parallels its utility as a subject for painting where the style might be called second-generation abstract-expressionism. Indeed, work posits the lettuce leaf as nature’s brushstroke.

“Spa Candles (2018)” takes up a subject -- the lit candle -- overloaded with the semiotics of spirituality and the infinite, of religious devotion and metaphysical revelation. The original image here however is drawn from an online advertisement for a massage parlor, a more carnal source. The discrepancy between real transcendence and simply “setting the mood” is almost palpable.

“Keep It Coming” (2018) partakes of the notion that “money is a sort of poetry” (Wallace Stevens) as well as referring to familiar art-world debates over the possibly malign interaction of money and esthetics. Robinson’s enthusiasm for this imagery dates back to his work in the late 1970s and early ‘80s with Collaborative Projects, which put images of cash as well as shaking hands, closed fists and other proto-emoticons to work as group insignia; the argument is that the idea of multiple artists using shared imagery is a practice to often honored today. In addition, pictures of piles of cash belong to both high and low culture, and are shared as advertisements by big banks and financial corporations and as social media posts by neo-gangsters and strippers’

Walter Robinson was born in 1950 and has lived and worked in New York City since 1968. In 1973 he launched Art-Rite magazine with two collaborators, publishing irregularly until 1977. During the same period he was a co-founder of Printed Matter, and somewhat later served as a correspondent for the cable TV show “Art TV Gallery Beat.” He began exhibiting his paintings in earnest with Collaborative Projects, participating in “The Real Estate Show” and “The Times Square Show” in 1980. In 1982 he had his first exhibition with Metro Pictures, and later showed at galleries in the East Village and elsewhere. He wrote reviews and art news for Art in America until 1996, when he became founding editor of Artnet Magazine, a post he held until 2012. A retrospective of his paintings opened at Illinois State University in Normal, IL, in 2014, traveling to the Galleries at Moore in Philadelphia, and debuting the new Jeffrey Deitch gallery in Soho in 2016. He has exhibited internationally at Galerie Bertrand in Geneva, Stems Gallery in Brussels, Inna Art Space in Hangzhou, China, and Vito Schnabel in St. Moritz, Switzerland. In 2017 his work was included in “Fast Forward: Work from the 1980s” at the Whitney Museum.

Johannes Vogt Gallery is committed to bringing attention to the complex artistic and cultural ties that bind New York to Europe, the Americas, and beyond. The gallery program features a strong roster of emerging to mid-career artists and has become known for reintroducing established artists to new audiences, including Garth Evans, Mernet Larsen, and Abby Leigh, among others. Founded in 2011, Johannes Vogt first opened at 526 West 26th Street in New York City’s Chelsea neighborhood, where it resided before relocating to 55 Chrystie Street in the Lower East Side. In September 2018, the gallery relocated to the Upper East Side at 958 Madison Avenue.

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money is the moment to me. money is my mood. --Andy Warhol

Money is a sort of poetry. -Wallace Stevens

Money acquires its meaning from the uses to which it is put.

Money it turned out was exactly like sex, you thought of nothing else if you didn't have it, and thought of other things if you did. --James Baldwin

For God's sakes, don't invest money with any brokerage firm if one of the partners is named "Frenchie." -Woody Allen

Money answers all things -Ecclesiastes