

ROBERT MILLER GALLERY

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GLEN RUBSAMEN: POLYGALA

November 2 – December 21, 2013

Opening: Friday, November 1, 6-8 PM

New York, NY – October 26, 2013. Robert Miller Gallery is pleased to announce *Polygala*, an exhibition of new paintings and photographs by Glen Rubsamen. *Reality doesn't need friends*, a 2010 video work, will also be shown for the first time in New York.

In his second solo exhibition at Robert Miller, Glen Rubsamen presents a series of paintings based on a project he began in 2012 to photograph juxtaposed billboards, palm trees and cell-phone masts. As Rubsamen explains, "It became quickly apparent that it was almost impossible to photograph a billboard in Los Angeles without a palm tree or cell-phone tower, or both, sneaking into the picture frame." Rubsamen describes the works' aesthetic construction as an 'accidental ensemble', an exercise in 'chance' and a humorous negation of the classical principles of perspective, sequence and scale.

Rubsamen views the modern billboard as a two dimensional, almost abstract, and constantly changing (sometimes digital), mass-media sales event, and the palms as living creatures that can age over a lifespan of multiple generations. Finally, the cell phone masts are 'utilities', tools of the telecommunication revolution and an essential part of the landscape like lamp posts and stoplights. The result of this 'accidental ensemble' is an image which defines a new 'Culture/Nature' symbiosis. The images transform themselves into a type of child's play, though the aim is no longer simply to codify all the players in the new landscape, but to understand the change that has overcome our physical relationship with technology and nature. The paintings depict a moment at dusk or dawn with the billboards, trees and cell towers coalescing into a hybrid of organic, technological and abstract shapes. They transform into a synthesis of the post-nature, a state where the elements of the landscape embody a para-modernity; a botched modernity in which space is shrinking. The objects in the landscape play no part in any synthesis and have no cultural memory, they simply bear witness.

In Rubsamen's 2010 video work *Reality doesn't need friends*, a palm tree arrives after traveling thousands of miles by truck and cargo ship at its final destination and new home, a commercial center in southern California. The palm travels in a reclining position but must be planted vertically so that it can grow and thrive. The work documents this simple but strange metamorphosis while defining the relationship between portrait and landscape as image format; landscape implying horizontal movement and migration, and portrait on the other hand, identity and place. Rubsamen's exploration of the essential difference between the vertical and the horizontal as compositional devices is made more profound by the juxtaposition of human activity, with its noises, machines, and hurried movement, to the silence and timeless aspect of nature embodied in the transplanted palm.

Glen Rubsamen was born in Los Angeles, California and studied at U.C.L.A. where he received his MFA. He lives and works in both Los Angeles and Düsseldorf, Germany. In recent years his work has been shown at the Kunstverein Munich, the Musee d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Strasbourg; the Taipei Biennial; and De Vleeshal, Middelburg, Holland. He has exhibited with Witte de With, Rotterdam, Netherlands; Galerie Michael Cosar, Düsseldorf, Germany; Alfonso Artiaco Gallery, Naples, Italy; AnneMarie Verna and Mai 36, Zurich Switzerland.

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Glen Rubsamen, *Reality doesn't need friends* (video still), 2010, DVD, 8 minutes, 18 seconds. © Glen Rubsamen. Courtesy the artist and Robert Miller Gallery.



Glen Rubsamen, *The pleasure sequence again*, 2013, Acrylic on linen, 18 x 24 inches, 45.7 x 61 centimeters. © Glen Rubsamen. Courtesy the artist and Robert Miller Gallery