

Keitelman Gallery

SUMMER CHAUD

26.06- 05.09.2015

opening 25.04.2015

6pm to 9pm

Opening 6-9 pm Thursday 25.06.2015

Tuesday - saturday 12 to 6pm

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The Keitelman Gallery is delighted to present its summer exhibition - an exhibition that is also *about* summer - somewhat ironically titled *Summer Chaud*. Summer and its myriad images are used here to evoke a sort of 'open sesame' for reading and rereading the work of modern and contemporary artists. From Auguste Renoir to Albert Camus, via Michelangelo Antonioni, Ingmar Bergman and Eric Rohmer, summer has always been a theme to which visual artists, filmmakers and writers have paid particular attention, often focusing on one particular aspect of this somewhat ambiguous season. If summer conjures up images of frivolity, love and seasonal wandering, it is also characterised by an inherently tragic element. It carries within it the idea of ruin, of suffocating humidity and of paralysis, as Antonioni and Camus (two authentic residents of the Mediterranean and its civilisations, both past and present) have both explored in emblematic ways.

The starting point of *Summer Chaud* is a naïve perspective that explores the nuances that can be discerned at the heart of the idea of summer. It seeks to appropriate, through the works shown, some of the many stereotypes associated with the season, their gradations and amendments.

Touching on stereotypes (not in any pejorative sense but in the sense of elements that constitute a collective imaginary deployed around the theme), the exhibition opens in spectacular fashion with the photography of Martin Parr who, with his unique British humour and an extraordinary sense of place, captures, in the manner of a sociologist, the very essence of organised community. This essence properly emerges during the vacation season, in the way that we don't find it hard to guess the nationality of tourists in holiday resorts according to the way they dress and behave. A true humanist, Parr shows how our apparent singularities disappear behind our childlike, touching, almost pathetic dimension, which, more than anything else, actually unites us.

Lisette Model, another photographer who captures the distinctive traits of certain 'characters' who appear in her work, was similarly fascinated by leisure and vacation, which she captured alongside her work as a street photographer. With the hint of black humour that is characteristic of her deeply empathetic images, she presents some of the characters that she encountered on the beach in America and along Nice's Promenade des Anglais.

Two works by **Peter Hutchinson** are on show in the exhibition. Hutchinson, born in 1930, was one of the pioneers of Land Art, alongside Robert Smithson. Like Smithson, his art is marked by an element of science fiction. But where Smithson can be unforgiving, offering a glimpse of the potential consequences of ecological disaster perpetrated by humankind, Hutchinson is a utopian. His work imagines a dreamlike

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future that resembles a luxuriant Eden, plunged into an eternal summer. An Eden that science (with self awareness) might strive to establish.

A painting by **Jean Brusselmans** reveals the rustic side of summer, with a backwoods quality that Brusselmans shares with his Flemish expressionist peers Constant Permeke and Frits Van den Berghe. Brusselmans sought during the interwar period to redynamise the genres that had supposedly run out of steam – still life, nudes and landscape – infusing them with a spirit that was simultaneously modernist, international, and eminently local. He evokes the balmy summer as it passes into the shade of fruit trees.

James Brown paints stars and space. The viewer absorbs the powerful lyricism of a bronze sculpture that represents the sun, king of the stars. The patina of the bronze, more than any other material, evokes in its very essence the burning state of the sun and thus the relationship between summer and fire, one of the four elements.

The same way of approaching the subject through material is to be found in the work of the Israeli artist **Gal Weinstein** – Israel, both sun kissed country and land of plenty, and country of war and drought. With immense virtuosity Weinstein uses glue and iron filings to recreate the historic desert landscape of the ancient city of Petra.

Thomas Ruff, using a synthesis of photography and colour, plunges into the very heart of light, an element that is associated both with the act of photography and with summer itself.

The Belgian artist **Lucile Bertrand** has two pieces in the show. The first is a piece created in 2004 for the Brussels art centre 'Le comptoir du Nylon'. It is made up of postcards from holidaymakers sent to the art centre and exhibited in the windows for passers by to see (those who had themselves not gone on holiday, or who were on holiday in the Belgian capital). The second is a double suite of texts and images, bringing together the artist's personal holiday souvenirs with photographs or texts detailing frequently tragic international news items. In both cases Lucile Bertrand is exploring the ways in which time and place are understood, in two intersecting perspectives: how places that for some are holiday destinations whilst for others they are places of drudgery, and how summer frivolity, however absolute it may be, cannot eclipse the turbulence to be found all over the world.

The exhibition also features some up and coming young artists. **Frédéric Fourdinier** presents three enigmatic wooden constructions covered in white paint. It takes the eye a moment to make out, in the filigree form of these minimalist and clean lined silhouettes, the shape of beehives. These 'ready-mades', picked up in nature by the artist and brought into the world of art, suggest the chasm that exists between a humanity preoccupied with the accumulation of possessions and a kind of hygienism pushed to its limits (for example in the heedless use of pesticides), and a natural kingdom suffering seriously from the consequences of this attitude (where a creature as essential to our world as the bee is at risk of disappearing) - the natural kingdom that we are happy to consume, all summer long.

Marc Buchy, like Thomas Ruff, goes to the heart of light by disassembling it in terms that are both scientific and poetic: since 24 images a second are required to try and capture something as fleeting as light (and/or as fleeting as summer, in our northern lands) Buchy, successor to the Impressionists, has produced twenty four colour silkscreen paintings, one for each moment.

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The painter **Emmanuelle Leblanc** also works with series and synthesis, but remains within the tradition of painting. Her small pictures painted on wood, in the tradition of medieval art, are the almost mathematical result of the meeting of different hues of daylight. They show a succession of scenes filled with such frivolity that the eye tries to hold on to them but only memory can be sure of its destiny, just as our memories of summer fuse, year after year, into a single image.