

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GREENE NAFTALI GALLERY

REGARDING AMY

Amy Gartrell

Christian Holstad

Jim Drain & Ara Peterson

Michael Mahalchick

Paul Chan

Elif Uras

June 18 through August 1st

Opening Wednesday June 18th 6-8 pm

The Greene Naftali Gallery is pleased to announce the summer show *Regarding Amy* which opens on June 18th and closes on August 1st. *Regarding Amy* is group show organized less on stylistic similarities than a group of themes centered on a kind of shared nostalgia for a time when music, attitudes, and cultural production was centered around a general celebration of the idiosyncratic rather than the academic. Now the term nostalgia is usually coined for an already over determined coherent criteria that implies a less than critical longing for a historical period. Themes like "anti-institutional," "punk," "hippy" are all aesthetic terms that have been collectively co-opted by the institutions they sought to debunk. But all of the artists here draw on these sources without irony. They signal a new generation of artists whose practices are characterized by an exhaustion with the ubiquitous irony that became de rigueur in mass culture and fueled much cultural production of the past twenty years. These artists value craft, imagination, and intuition, wherein object and image are developed not from the spectacle that drives our culture but from an interior space unsullied by the technological and advertising vernacular that inspired much late modernism.

The sculptural centerpiece of the show by Jim Drain and Ara Peterson, formerly of the art collective Forcefield, is a giant kaleidoscope which references psychedelia and 60's experiments in space and time. Amy Gartrell contributes a large stained glass work and a selection of drawings. Moving between bedroom earnestness and *nature morte*, Gartrell's work is marked by a pronounced gothic sensibility informed by rock-and-roll iconography, hallucinogenic colors, and finely drawn text and image interplay. Artist Chris Holstad's work has long been involved in a kind of quasi-spiritual performance involving ceremonies centered on redemption and awakening. His practice also includes traditionally defined handcrafts and lo-fi artifacts that allude to utopian ideals of a pre-industrial society. Using needlepoint, crafts, quilts, and borrowing 60's aesthetics of psychedelia and domesticity, he creates magical objects and images that on the surface seem to have been born out of a child's playroom, but on closer inspection are deeply political, infused with references to feminist art of the 60's and Mike Kelley's interest in the discarded remnants of popular mass culture. Elif Uras' paintings use a fractured pictorial space mixing interiors, landscapes and idyllic scenes with brilliant colors to a peculiar dazzling effect. Paul Chan's *Happiness Finally after thirty Five*

Thousand Years of Civilization is a dark reworking of Henry Darger's illustrations and inspired by Charles Fourier's exploration of the Theory of Four Movements. Chan unveils a world that challenges contemporary notions of utopia and violence, providing a charged narrative of death and interplanetary communication.

While both disparate formally and conceptually, all the artists in *Regarding Amy* in some sense debunk the myths of modernism's desire for unity and perfection. The playful handling of everyday materials and rejection of the slick production values also indicate a subtext of political and social upheaval as seen through the many tropes of 60's era utopianism. Michael Mahalchick, a founding member of the band "Experimental Makeup" has contributed a slide projection in which each slide image is meant to convey the meaning of a song using just the movement of his eye. The effect, while humorous and silly is also extremely psychological, exploring how the most primitive gestures can register as signs of emotion. *Regarding Amy* reflects a new generation of artists who have absorbed recent art historical traditions and infused them with a sense of subversion, humor and wit, but privileges the intuitive and imaginary over the analytic and the intellectual. Not to be misunderstood as comedy, they have simply replaced theatre (in the sense of Michael Fried) with a sense of accessibility that makes them all the more intriguing, both in traditional forms like paintings and new genres such as video. These objects and images represent a new generation of art practice that disavows the arch psychology of post-modernism. If anything, they reflect a trend away from the overproduction and over-determined state of art production that seems the zeitgeist of the past ten years. *Regarding Amy* beckons for the recent collective desire for an art practice that provides questions, not answers, and more importantly, delivers an art of the mind and the heart.

For more information please contact the gallery at 212 463 7770.