

Press release

Fabrice Gygi - Cameron Jamie

February 9 - April 13 2002

The **Galerie Chantal Crousel** is proposing an unusual combination by inviting **Cameron Jamie** for the first time to exhibit with **Fabrice Gygi** who will show works on paper which have never yet been presented in France.

Of **Fabrice Gygi's** work, one mainly knows about the sculptures he produces himself or industrially, such as the monumental one that is being produced right now in Niort for the Sao Paulo Biennale next March. Structures made out of thick plastic covers, steel, wood and tubes that are simultaneously alienating and sensual, projects for objects or functional furniture, and which seem devoted to meetings, raves or even to sports, political or spiritual gatherings. He is also known for his radical performances. The linographies on paper and on fabric were made at a time when the artist was engaged in research about himself and about his art. Between the ages of 11 and 15, he made most of the tattoos which cover his body and which one will encounter in the linographies in the show. In 1982, he began drawing them in small notebooks. Between 1984 and 1990 he frequented the etching studios at the Fine Art School of Geneva. He liked the results of this technique and has been mastering it since 1982. Many trips punctuated Fabrice Gygi's life at that time: Berlin, then the Island of Baffin in the Canadian Arctic archipelago, and later Brazil. Simple portable linographies became a predominant medium. He started sewing bags to organize and transport his mountain equipment. This process was connected to seeking solitude, to climbing and trekking, which he liked to practice in extreme climactic conditions. The plates we are presenting, the result of ten years of work, are an expression of disappearance, of a strong search for identity and of a rebel attitude that is dominant in his work. "I feel that I'm retranscribing things I've observed around the world. I work a little bit like a figurative painter with a real concern for realism. I try to appropriate the object by making it by memory" he said while speaking of his sculptures.

This quote could also apply to **Cameron Jamie's** work which is partly inspired by the mayhem of American suburbs. It is in this atmosphere that Jamie creates his weirdest images which remind us that hell is always close by and that reason is not always reliable. For the works on paper we are presenting, the artist has collaborated with a street portrait artist who he asked to make portraits of his face made up in white and of "evil" animals such as goats or bats. Calling on the demons of his childhood, Cameron Jamie then reappropriates the drawings by subjecting them to outrageous offenses : distorted or caricatured faces, human heads on animal bodies, entrails spilling out, in exulting compositions with pastel and gouache, collage and stream-of-consciousness writing. The expressionistic aspect of his drawings are filled with subtle connections, such as when they form the map of his native city : San Fernando Valley. It is via the techniques of drawing that Jamie has given shape to his will to build up a peculiar work arising from his deepest obsessions. Never grotesque, it rather retains a sense of humor and the distance particular to the tradition of the "grand guignol", as encountered in the surprising series of black and white photographs entitled "Spook House". Cameron Jamie also made many films, among them "BB". In this disconcerting super 8 film (18mm B&W), the artist introduces us to backyard wrestling games organized by L.A. suburb teenagers. Jamie films wide-angle shots, sometimes against the light, which are shown in slow motion and with a Wagnerian soundtrack by the Melvins.

The exhibition by Fabrice Gygi was made possible thanks to Christophe Chérix from the Cabinet des Estampes and Michèle Freiburghaus from the Fond Municipal Art Contemporain in Geneva. Cameron Jamie's films and photographs are available at the gallery by appointment. We would like to thank the Centre National de l'Estampe et de l'Art Imprimé of Chatou for their collaboration.

Editions by Cameron Jamie and publications on Fabrice Gygi are available in the bookshop in the basement.

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