

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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COUP DE GRÂCE

TOUHAMI ENNADRE

GENERAL IDEA

MARY KELLY

MICHELLE LOPEZ

DANIEL JOSEPH MARTINEZ

Simon Preston Gallery is pleased to announce its inaugural exhibition, *Coup de Grâce*, which opens to the public on Wednesday, March 12, and runs until Wednesday, April 23.

A 'coup de grâce' refers to a violent act with merciful intent. A deathblow intended to end suffering. The five artists in the exhibition explore the opposing roles of aggressor and victim, and through an unconventional use of sculpture, photography and painting, attempts are made to provoke, transform and repair with varying degrees of success. Natural order is reversed with this inaugural exhibition challenging an action inherently reserved as the final act.

Intimidating and unidentifiable, Daniel Joseph Martinez' animatronic sculpture fuses the body horror of Cronenberg sci-fi with a mutating Nietzschean über-man. The viewer is implicated in a spectacle of violence and the walls and floor of the gallery become covered in pools of blood as the armature continually re-aligns in an attempt to locate its victim.

Touhami Ennadre confronts a similar spectacle in his large-scale photographs. After visiting bullfighting arenas during the *Féria* at Arles, Ennadre was less interested in the bravura of the bullfight itself, and became eager to portray the torero's relationship with the mortally wounded bull. Tightly framing his subject, and submerging them against a background of deep black, each photograph depicts the quasi-religious flaying of an animal that has just died in a public arena. Horns, eyes, flesh and bones merge together to form a visual apotheosis.

Religious iconography is further examined in Michelle Lopez's *Crux*. Consisting of recombined Sycamore branches grafted together with cast prosthetic limbs and metal joints, the tree appears ravaged and broken. An anti-metaphorical landscape, it appears futile in its attempt at re-building itself.

Through fictional narrative, Mary Kelly's two works explore the effect of trauma. The two postcards shown are the completion of a series based on the murders of three civil rights activists during a voter registration drive in 1964, near Philadelphia, MS. The infamous

"Mississippi Burning" trial that took place in 1967 convicted 7 of the men involved. In June 2005, Edgar Ray Killen, well known as the instigator, was finally convicted and sentenced to 60 years on 3 counts of manslaughter. Each postcard is comprised of fictional text written by one of the victim's parents responding to news of his conviction. The image is produced through the process of lint collection during months of washing and drying thousands of pounds of laundry. This process and material hints at the protection and healing through time filled with routine daily activity.

Trauma and suffering are also characterized in General Idea's Achrome (Manzoni). In the 70s and early 80s General Idea developed singular methods of appropriation. By the early '90s, with the consciousness of the AIDS crisis, they developed a strategy for elaborating on the critical meaning of older works of art, here by 'infecting' the familiarity of Manzoni's creased canvas with the form of three pills. Echoing Donald Moffett's brilliant 'Silence=Death', Minimalism is loaded with denial and amnesia.

Simon Preston Gallery is located at 301 Broome Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 6pm. The nearest subway stops are Grand Street on the B/D lines and Delancey Street on the F/J/M/Z lines. For more information please contact office@simonprestongallery.com or call the gallery on 212- 431-1105.