

## *Robert Feintuch: Selected Paintings 2010-2018*

18/12/2020 – 13/02/2021

Opening: December 18<sup>th</sup> 2020, h. 6:30pm.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, h 2-7:00 pm.

Thomas Brambilla Gallery is pleased to present Robert Feintuch first solo show at the gallery, which opens on Friday December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 6:30 pm. The exhibition includes both recent and historical works by the American artist, which best describes his practice.

[...] I first noticed Robert Feintuch's work on the cover of the Brooklyn Rail, in 2014, and I thought the paintings were crazy. I was surprised to find myself thinking about his work a lot across the next several years and I began to research it. As I saw more paintings, and returned to others, what seemed crazy became deep and complex. Having spent a long time studying his paintings, I thought, *"How did I not know this work?"* and I very much wanted to show it.

Feintuch moved to New York in 1970 to go to Cooper Union. In the late 70's, when formalist abstract painting, minimalism and post-minimalism were dominant, he began to make a transition from working abstractly to painting figuratively. Feintuch's work roams through paintings' past, and the way it speaks to the present is very human, individual, and rich. He achieves a kind of simplicity in his images, but they are complex in the ways they suggest a range of often contradictory feelings and meanings. And I fell in love with the unique sensuous presence and physical beauty of his paintings the first time I stood in front of them.

As I read about his work, I saw that I was not alone in seeing the paintings are richly suggestive: *"Feintuch's work embraces a kind of productive ambiguity"* and his paintings have been described as images that are simultaneously *"tragicomic"*, *"tender"* and *"subversively ironic"*. Influenced by early Italian and Gothic paintings, and cartoons from his childhood, Feintuch inserts parts or all of his own body into each image. But *"Feintuch's paintings may or may not be autobiographical. One might see in the nude viewed from the rear an ironic self-portrait (who, if anyone, sees himself from behind?) but the most striking features in this group of paintings are the slapstick-style scenes of vulnerability, and the ridiculous..."*

Many writers have remarked on the contrasts between references to authority and vulnerability in Feintuch's paintings, seeing in his work *"a mix of heroism and humiliation"* saying that *"his works mediate between the old masters' interest in grandiosity and the more contemporary interest in frailty and physicality"* and that *"Robert Feintuch reinterprets myth...figuring and reliving it with deadpan theatricality, almost to the point of farce..."*

## THOMAS BRAMBILLA

This exhibition includes paintings that evoke historic images of the Assumption, and Heaven, and others that refer to or evoke mythological figures including Hercules, Bacchus, and Icarus.

Calling the work *“thought provoking and memorable”*, critics have responded to his paintings’ physical presences saying, *“the work is dazzling from a technical perspective.”* *“Feintuch’s a terrific painter, whatever the subject. These paintings glow. The pinks soak up sun even in a darkened room, and they have the dry, fine-grained quality of frescoes.”* *“These works wrestle with the debilitations and humiliations mortality imposes on us, but also with the possibility of grace, which we find in beauty and in hope.”*

In the interview in the 2014 Brooklyn Rail, Feintuch said, *“I’m moved by things that are beautiful but have enough discomfort in them to seem real...To me, life is difficult, funny sometimes, and one way to get through it is to laugh. It’s uncomfortable. It’s beautiful. Sometimes it’s sexy. Lots of the time it’s not. And I want all of that.”* [...]

Thomas Brambilla

Robert Feintuch (b. 1953 Jersey City, NJ) lives and works in New York. Since 1985 he has had solo exhibitions at Sonnabend Gallery, New York, Akira Ikeda Gallery, Berlin, Studio La Città, Verona, CRG Gallery, New York, Daniel Newburg Gallery, New York and Howard Yezerski Gallery, Boston, among others.

His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions at institutions internationally including The Peggy Guggenheim Foundation (Venice), Ca’ Pesaro Galleria Internazionale d’Arte Moderna (Venice), Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art (Porto), The Rupertinum (Salzburg), Museum für modern zeitgenössische Kunst (Bolzano), Remai Modern (Saskatoon), The National Academy Museum, (New York), The Addison Gallery of American Art, (Andover), and in the Venice Biennale.

His work is in the collections of museums including The Wadsworth Atheneum, The Portland Museum, The Columbus Museum of Art, The Worcester Museum, The Fort Wayne Museum of Art, The Addison Gallery, and The Bates Museum.