

Juan Gomez
Curated by Vincent Katz

February 2 – March 11, 2006
(Opening Reception: Thursday, February 2, 6-8pm)

“One is taken, over all, with the materiality of Gomez’s work and comes away from it wondering if, despite the titillation of some of the imagery, the main attraction is of someone who is really involved with the medium of paint.”

—Vincent Katz

Capturing the impact of movement and exploring its many permutations is of paramount interest to Juan Gomez. It is evidenced by the lyrical brushwork of his abstractions and most strikingly apparent in the erotic positions assumed by his nude figures in the oil paintings and watercolors on view at his first solo exhibition in New York at CUE.

Moving away from an earlier preoccupation with color and texture, and painting which wielded a tremendous sense of urgency, his current paintings demonstrate a certain ease and ability to incorporate narratives determined by more external factors. Taking note of colors associated with time of day, temperature, and the sensation of the landscape, Gomez works with simple lines, keeping most of his attention focused on how elements of color, line direction, and form interact with one another on the surface. Like gentle strokes placed upon the body, Gomez’s brushes extol a range of movement, which include curved, straight, or free-flowing contour lines with the resulting forms serving as extensions of intuitive gesture.

While lush, serpentine, curvilinear forms exist in both Gomez’s abstract and figurative painting, color or atmosphere as tools for expression are less articulated in his nudes. Instead, by emphasizing the most erogenous zones of the body, and placing his nude figures in unabashedly provocative positions, Gomez confronts the viewer with his or her own reactions to possible states of mind or moods in which wanton passions rule and primal nature reigns.



110341, 2004
Oil on canvas, 70”x 68”



070371, 2004
Oil on canvas, 60”x 66”

Fascinated with both nature and the nature of people, Gomez’s inspirations for his figurative work include such diverse sources as Mayan and Pre-Columbian art, the American cinema of the Abel Ferrara, and the dark forces explored through Japanese Butoh dance. He finds within the tormented revelations of Butoh performers, or the threatening-yet-vulnerable character portrayals by actors like Harvey Keitel, the compelling, quixotic ability to be detached from reality, yet still appear grounded. While contemporary society may consider itself to be more evolved than the Maya, Homer, and the Greeks, according to Gomez, “we are all basically driven by emotions, relationships, and love. Background elements or narratives don’t interest me in (Cont’d)

terms of context. I am more focused on basic nature, and animal-like instincts.” Given that contemporary society appears to him in many ways uncivilized, the natural choice for Gomez was to begin painting nudes unencumbered by specific cultural contexts.

This young artist is especially drawn to the ways in which he can impart a sense of sculptural weight, feeling, and form to the naked body through color, texture, and line – a presence further heightened by the manner in which he composes the body with mouth, breasts, nipples, buttocks, and feet accentuated. Even toes are rendered as little spheres, with their own distinct volume. In many of his female nude paintings, a unifying neutral background of whitish grays is painted in fluid brushstrokes counterbalanced by simplified outlines of form. Elongation, elasticity of limbs, and absence of other figurative details add to the sculptural effect.

Working intuitively allows Gomez to alternate loose interpretation with careful refining of the figure by playing with texture, body angles, and adding details. Tracing and pulling out forms from sketches have made him adept at editing his subconscious and knowing when the desired results are achieved. He exploits the materials offered by each medium – painting in oil provides him a freedom and fluidity of line, while watercolor enables him to concentrate more on structure. Constituting the most formally cohesive grouping within the exhibition, Gomez’s erotic watercolors are presented serially and share a similar background. Rather than having a muting effect upon the sexual imagery depicted, the use of a consistent, subtle, monochromatic wash draws attention the details of the activity taking place.

Through painting grounded in gesture, Juan Gomez communicates a broad expanse of emotions, ranging from absolute grace to restless desire, and whether working in abstraction or figuration, his search for humanity and connection comes through.

ARTIST’S BIO:

Juan Gomez was born and raised in Bogota, Colombia in 1970, and moved to the United States in 1990. Gomez received a BFA in Fine Arts at the School of Visual Arts, New York, NY, in 1998. He has participated in group exhibitions at Audiello Fine Arts, Art in General, Lombard-Freid Projects and Momenta Art in New York, NY, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, CT, and Turner & Runyon Gallery in Dallas, TX.

ABOUT CUE:

CUE Art Foundation, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, provides educational and professional development programs in the visual arts. These include student internships, stipends, exhibitions, public lectures, and an in-gallery studio program, all of which draw from the talents and experience of the diverse community of artists, art critics, and teachers that the Foundation brings together.

CUE's exhibition season gives unknown or under-recognized artists public and professional exposure comparable to that offered by neighboring commercial galleries, without the usual financial restraints. The Advisory Council, an honorary group of artists and leading figures from the arts education, applied arts, art history, and literary communities, has the responsibility of selecting exhibition curators. The curators, in turn, nominate artists to exhibit at CUE, and continue to play a role throughout the exhibition process. Both the Advisory Council and the exhibition curators actively participate in the public lectures and educational programs.

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For additional exhibition information, please contact Beatrice Wolert-Weese, Gallery Assistant, CUE Art Foundation, 212 206-3583, or email beatrice.wolert@cueartfoundation.org.