

PRESS

# dean monogenis

## VIEW BREAK

Exhibition from June 8<sup>th</sup> to July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013

Opening Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup> starting at 3 pm

Xippas Gallery has the pleasure of presenting Dean Monogenis's first solo exhibition in France. The American painter will show over a dozen original works of small and medium scale.

Monogenis's paintings reveal architectures, most often modernist but sometimes contemporary, in natural environments free of human beings. The buildings, either in construction or in ruins, stand isolated in landscapes that are difficult to identify. Monogenis reconstructs archaeologies of the present, remnants of recent civilizations, and a universe in perpetual evolution: here he highlights a particular transitional moment that can be seen as the struggle between massive urbanism and a resistant mother nature. Above all else, the painter wishes to show structural elements, skeletons, and materials – for example the heaters in *Longevity Rises* (2010) and the pylons in *Rescue the Restive* (2013) and *Ronda* (2013)

The exhibition title *View Break* is taken from a specific real estate term that designates the cut off point where the landscape view is not obstructed by buildings. In most of the artwork made for this exhibition, the houses are perched on cliffs – as seen in *Athos* (2013) and *P.O.V* (2013) – or they are suspended like cocoons, as in *Facing East* (2013) and *The Other Way* (2013). This group of artworks projects a feeling that we are teetering on the edge of the world. The quest for the "best" view has been instilled in us over thousands of years, whether we think of homes in Malibu, California, or the ancient constructions of Meteora in Greece or the sacred city of Lhasa in Tibet: "Of course, there is an important psychological element that makes us want to live in a particular place, which stems first from the need to possess. But, what interests me is that it is also a vehicle for a message, or a space for external projection," explains Monogenis. Through the lens of architecture, the painter investigates this feeling of belonging that is specific to a given culture.

Monogenis is inspired by his own collection of images that he accumulated during his travels or found on the Internet. The architectural reality that Monogenis methodically reproduces with precision is constantly disturbed by his choice of fantastical colors and his incorporation of graphic abstract elements. This expert combination operates somewhere between finger painting and stenciled appliqué on a canvas of wooden or plastic panels. Meanwhile, the presence of lines or checkerboards, the play of unnatural colors, and the superposition of surfaces cancel out any preconceived notions of backdrop and foreground and plunge us into a state of doubt and muted confusion not unlike reality.

By observing recent utopias and selecting their symbols, Monogenis reveals the difference between what we can conceive of and what we see, i.e. what we can dream. When faced with the ideology of progress associated with modernist thought resolutely turned towards the future, Monogenis marks the precise moment of transition and mutation, when it can be complicated to determine the first element of change. He relies on the principle of uncertainty. The strength of Dean Monogenis's work resides in his ability to combine the observer's vision of the world with the metamorphoses in his paintings.

Dean Monogenis was born in New York in 1973. He attended Skidmore College and graduated from the Art Institute of Chicago. Since then, he has lived and worked in Brooklyn, New York.

Dean Monogenis has shown at Riva Gallery, Annina Nosei Gallery, Stux Gallery, Morgan Lehman Gallery, Elga Wimmer Gallery, Priska C.Juschka Fine Art in New York City, Walter Maciel Gallery in Los Angeles, and also Antoni Battaglia Arte Contemporanea in Milan. This year, Dean Monogenis was awarded the Artist in the Market Place (AIM) Program from the Bronx Museum of the Arts (Bronx, NY, USA). His work was shown in numerous group shows: "Incognito" at Santa Monica Museum of Art (Santa Monica), "Recent Acquisitions" at the Federal Reserve Board, (Washington), "Reconstruction Nature" at Hunterdon Art Museum (Clinton, New Jersey), "Future Tense" at the Neuberger Museum (New York), "Lost Horizon" at the Herter Gallery (University of Massachusetts, Amherst), and "Beautiful Dreamer" at Spaces Gallery (Cleveland, Ohio).