

RE-EMERGING ARTISTS:
John Greene AND Robert Marx

April 8–May 12, 2017

About the Exhibition

“Artists have a way of changing and adapting throughout their careers, however long they may be. They may change their style, or choice of materials, and their work may be shown in galleries near and far. This exhibition features paintings and drawings by two late-career artists who have been making art since the 1950s. They have come full circle from being ‘emerging’ artists, to becoming more established in their careers and their craft, and are now ‘re-emerging’ to a new generation and a new audience. One thing has remained consistent for both artists since the beginning, a dedication to a personal vision and an intense work ethic. Both John and Robert work in their studios every day and have devoted decades to their artwork.

I have had the pleasure of visiting both John and Robert in their studios several times in preparation for this show and was able to talk with them at length about their work and their careers. The resulting exhibition represents two, well-seasoned artists who still push themselves daily to discover new and exciting ways to make art. A majority of the work in this show is brand new and many pieces have not been seen outside of the studio before.

I hope that you enjoy this exhibition as much as I do!”

—Bradley Butler, gallery director and curator

About Robert Marx

Robert Ernst Marx has been painting, drawing, printing, and sculpting since 1953. He has shown his work internationally and is represented in major museum collections including: Museum of Modern Art, The National Gallery of Art, Whitney Museum of Art, Memorial Art Gallery, the Seattle Art Museum, and many others.

“The people I draw, paint and sculpt personify the human condition. They are also the people we see around us, every day.

I have favorite themes. I am troubled by the arrogance of power the exclusivity of the institutions of church and state the abuse of and by both spouse and child, and our own and others' personal fears and insecurities. We are also to some degree trapped by the conventions we have chosen to impose upon ourselves.

While painful to express, these themes desperately need expression, and I have done it by creating my own visual language while building upon the inventions of my artistic ancestors. For example, Picasso was the first to paint a dismembered human body to convey a sense of futility. I also use symbols: mannequins, masks, and dangling limbs on puppet strings, as my visual “shorthand” for the controlling forces which frustrate us all.

I work not only for myself, but also to make a connection with you. I do so as elegantly as I can and with an ambiguity that invites you to join your interpretation with my own.

If I am successful, my people
will now make eye contact
with you...and our dialogue
will begin.”

—Robert Marx

About John Greene

John D. Greene has been painting since the 1950s. He spent 30 years working on Wall Street but always maintained a studio in the West Village area of New York City. He would go after the market closed and use whatever energy he had left to paint large, intense canvases. Now, he paints in his home studio in the Hudson River Valley. He has shown his encaustic paintings nationally and is included in numerous private and public collections.

“For me, painting is, in the end, about paint: color, texture, the joy of putting it on and scraping it off. I believe the results are best served by keen and repeated viewing.

I try to introduce elements that are hidden or apparent, that will encourage ‘reading’ the paintings many times and constantly discovering something new. My painting is primarily about surface, and surface in turn is about feeling— it can be ambivalent. It gives the illusion of depth and reflection, of time and memory and complexity. One crucial element of ALL my work is the texture of the paintings, the materials I employ and the feeling they create.

To that end, I have found that encaustic—which is really a technique—best expresses for me what I want to project in my work. Wax is one of the earliest materials known to man; indeed, the early Egyptian paintings have endured to this day. Incidentally, even their deceased were treated with this wax, which resulted in the mummies we are able to see today, and which imbues them with a sense of both mystery and permanence. The combination of materials I sometimes use in my work—steel, wood, lead and copper—have an ever-changing patina and surface, whereas the wax, which is difficult to control and may lead to wonderful accidents, in the end counteracts the aging and metamorphosis of the rest of my materials.

Above all, I love the PROCESS of making a painting—revealing parts of myself that might be a mystery even to me. I love the smells, textures, endless decisions and accidents that come from the paint, the wax, and any other materials, that seem to be consistent with my purpose, my aesthetic.

The making of art is a sensual endeavor, and all the better if it speaks to the viewer—to me that is the greatest barometer of success. ”

—John Greene