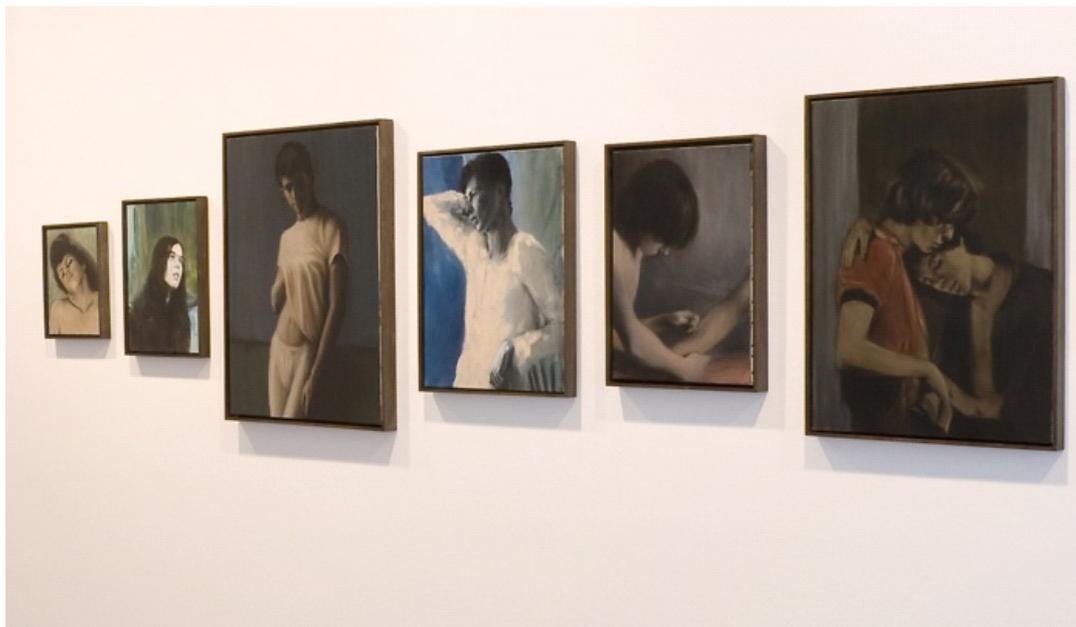


PAUL P.

THREE PARTS GLASS

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

04 Oct 2009 - 21 Nov 2009



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac takes pleasure in announcing an exhibition of new works by the Canadian artist Paul P. Under the title *Three Parts Glass*, a telling expression taken from a novel by Ronald Firbank (1886-1926), a series of new oil paintings will be presented in the gallery Annex.

Works by Paul P. were first shown in Salzburg in the group exhibition *Heavenly Creatures* curated by Lisa Ruyter in 2004. *Three Parts Glass* is now his fifth solo exhibition in the Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, and the second in Salzburg, after the well-received *Blue and Opal* (2006/07).

This exhibition demonstrates once again the artist's interest in colour combinations and atmosphere, similarly to the works of James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) and William Turner (1775-1851). All the pictures show young men, sometimes as half-length portraits, sometimes as figures lost in some gloomy landscape or dingy interior. While close attention is paid to rendering the figures as faithfully as possible, at the same time the portrayal of the figures and their surroundings creates the kind of atmosphere found in impressionist painting. Sometimes lustreless, wistful or distant, the pictures hark back to the aesthetic vocabulary of the belle époque, representing the figures in highly suggestive yet nonchalant poses which make us forget that the picture was originally taken from erotic magazines of the 1960s to '80s. The French expression *l'heure bleue* seems to serve Paul P. (who now lives in Paris) as a leitmotiv for this series - not only in the sense of the twilight hour, but used also to describe the atmosphere of Paris just before the First World War: an Age of Innocence.

Vince Aletti wrote in 2006 that the young men in his pictures, all of whom posed for soft-core gay porn magazines, were at the apogee of their post-adolescence, just before the end of another kind of fin-de-siècle - of the end of the "anything goes" era that came to an abrupt halt with the advent of AIDS. These young men became symbols - perhaps not of innocence, but rather of liberation, or perhaps of sweet abandonment. By bringing back their pictures, Paul P. has brought back a largely buried part of the gay past, shedding light on life that anticipated his own and took a similar course. He focuses on faces which capture the feel of the age and go beyond it - faces which express something deeper than the usual vacant grin. Merging in his work are memory, ecstasy and loss, adolescence and decadence, mature beauty and its inevitable decay. His drawings are skilful and precise, but not "cool", not detached, not modern. Rather, they are romantic, in a discreet, seductive way - at once restrained and sensual.

Paul P. graduated in Fine Arts at York University in Toronto in 2000. During the past two years he has held solo exhibitions Los Angeles (Marc Selwyn), Paris (Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac), New York (Daniel Reich) and London (Maureen Paley). His first comprehensive monograph appeared in spring 2007, published by Powerhouse Books, New York. His most important institutional exhibition to date was shown at the Power Plant in Toronto in 2007, under the title *Dusks, Lamplights*. Works by Paul P. are to be found in the Museum of Modern Art, New York and other public collections. A block of his works is on show at the MoMA until 4 January 2010 as part of the exhibition *Compass in Hand: Selections from The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawings Collection*.