

DOLBY CHADWICK GALLERY

Philip Buller

Human Patterns

March 2 — April 1, 2017

Dolby Chadwick Gallery is pleased to announce “Human Patterns,” an exhibition of new work by the artist Philip Buller, opening Thursday, March 2. A painter whose practice is influenced by a range of artmaking techniques, Buller explores patterns of human experience and organization by recognizing their echo in visual patterns.

Buller recently started working from found photographs that frequently feature crowds. *Beach Memory* (2016), for instance, is dominated by a network of interlocking bodies, both moving and stationary. While individual actors and groups are engaged in unique behaviors and interactions, when taken together, they produce a rhythmic, harmonious arrangement.

Beyond the figure, Buller carefully attends to his paintings’ negative spaces, which not only are essential for describing a subject but contain truths in their own right. They also offer a “back door” into a painting that allows for a deeper, freer refinement of its formal and emotional elements. In a move that both deconstructs and highlights the role played by these loaded voids, Buller periodically transfers the negative shapes apparent within one painting onto the surface of another. Even if the viewer does not consciously recognize these recycled forms, they nevertheless have the potential to trigger an awareness of a deeper pattern.

Repetition of visual information, Buller notes, enables him to access a certain feeling in his work—one inflected by longing and familiar at a primal level. In earlier work, Buller used carefully comported faces—especially those looking back out, inviting us to partake in a shared experience—to ignite within us a recognition of what it means to be human and what it feels like to be alive. While this type of reflexive engagement is still of primary importance, Buller now sets it up through a focus on the power of repeated arrangements of shape and color. Here, cycles of human experience, such as loss and transformation, conflict and redemption, are newly articulated through direct visual proxies. The introduction of printmaking into the artist’s practice has proved invaluable in this regard: after painting through a screen set flush with the surface of a canvas, he uses the residue on the screen to reproduce the image—often distorted, flipped, or reversed—either elsewhere in the same painting or in a different work altogether. These visual echoes produce a numinous energy, which is heightened by his signature blurring and obscuring, while also opening up to contemplation the complex workings of memory.

In addition to adopting printmaking techniques, Buller uses a type of alkyd painting medium that dries in twenty-four hours, forcing him to work for long stretches and without pause while the paint is still wet. He also frequently drags a squeegee across select passages in a manner reminiscent of Gerhard Richter. Buller explains that the squeegee is, for him, the tool of “letting go. It offers a wonderful moment of freedom—a freedom from the fear of ruining something hard won. Addressing the fear is what makes the process rich.” He considers how a commitment to

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generosity, writ broadly, exists at the heart of this impulse: “generosity, as opposed to courage, might be the opposite of fear. With paintings that move me, I feel that the maker is being generous. When the process feels like it is narrowing, generosity can break through that. The generosity is to work hard to create something, to become attached to it, and then to be willing to let it go.”

Many of Buller’s paintings can be understood as homages to the great painters of the Italian Renaissance, such as Titian, and the Baroque masters Caravaggio and Velazquez. He reveres these artists, he explains, for their unparalleled ability “to marry the aesthetic (symbolized by the eye), the conceptual or intellectual (the mind), and the spiritual (the heart)—and to recognize and manifest so profoundly human patterns of their time.” By studying their compositions and reworking them, he both participates in the original act of generosity that he strives to extend and repeats the age-old human custom of storytelling and interpretation.

Philip Buller was born in 1954, in New Delhi, India, to American diplomat parents. He earned a BA from Sonoma State University in 1992 followed by a MFA from California College of the Arts in 1994. In addition to exhibiting extensively across the United States, Buller has had works acquired into public and private collections worldwide. He currently lives and works on Galiano Island in British Columbia. This will be his first solo exhibition at Dolby Chadwick Gallery.

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Philip Buller

EDUCATION

- 1994 MFA Fine Arts, California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA
1992 BA Fine Arts, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, CA
1985 Illustration, The Illustrators Studio, Northampton, MA
1973-1987 Graphic Design & Painting, Berkshire Community College, Pittsfield, MA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 *Human Patterns*, Dolby Chadwick Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2016 *Ice*, Julie Nester Gallery, Park City, Utah
2015 *Summer Show*, Madison Gallery, LaJolla, CA
New Works, Quidley & Company Fine Art, Nantucket, MA
2014 *Used Paintings*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2013 *An Other*, Quidley & Company Fine Art Gallery, Boston, MA
2012 *Every One*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Narrative Fragments, Quidley & Company Fine Art Gallery, Boston, MA
2011 *Pace*, John Natsoulas Gallery, Davis, CA
2010 *Vulnerability*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Inside Passage, Susan Street Fine Art, Solana Beach, CA
2009 *In The Mines*, Julie Nester Gallery, Park City, Utah
2008 *Every Little Act*, Susan Street Fine Art Gallery, Solana Beach, CA
North, Julie Nester Gallery, Park City, Utah
2007 *Ancestor*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Looking In, Julie Nester Gallery, Park City, Utah
2006 *Seeing*, Susan Street Fine Art Gallery, Solana Beach, CA
2005 *Recognition*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Being Found, Susan Street Fine Art Gallery, Solana Beach, CA
2004 *The Colourful Darkness*, Elliott Louis Gallery, Vancouver, BC
2003 *Details*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Alumni Show, Sonoma State University Gallery, Rohnert Park, CA
In The Crowd, Shorestein, Bank of America Headquarters, San Francisco, CA
Figures and Fantasies, Anne Bradford Gallery, Healdsburg, CA
2002 *Emergence*, Anne Bradford Gallery, Healdsburg, CA
2001 *Exchange*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Three Trees, Bodega Landmark Studios, Bodega, CA
2000 *New Paintings*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1999 *Recent Work*, pastels, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
Faculty Show, Santa Rosa Junior College Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA
1998 *New Work*, Adjunct Faculty Show, Santa Rosa Junior College Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA
New Paintings, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
That Figures, Long Beach Arts, Long Beach, CA
Slide Registry Show, California Museum of Art, Santa Rosa, CA
In Italia, Bodega Landmark Studios, Bodega, CA
1997 *Curated Working from the Body*, Santa Rosa Junior College Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA
1996 *New Paintings*, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
1995 *Reflections on Water*, Bodega Landmark Studios, Bodega, CA
Adjunct Faculty Show, Santa Rosa Junior College Gallery, Santa Rosa, CA

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- 1995 *New Talent*, Alpha Gallery, Boston, MA
1994 *Alumni Show*, Sonoma State University Gallery, Rohnert Park, CA
MFA Show, Oliver Art Center, MFA Exhibition, Oakland, CA
1991 *Rural Light*, Bodega Landmark Studios, Bodega, CA
Recent Paintings, Bodega Landmark Studios, Bodega, CA
Student Show, Sonoma State University Gallery, Rohnert Park, CA
1990 Warner Roberts Gallery, Palo Alto, CA
1987 Berkshire Artisans Gallery, Pittsfield, MA
1986 Thornes Gallery, Northampton, MA
Warner Roberts Gallery, Palo Alto, CA
Phillip Barber Gallery, Becket, MA
1985 Church Street Cafe, Lenox, MA
Woods Hole Gallery, Woods Hole, MA
Phillip Barber Gallery, Becket, MA
The Underground Gallery, Lenox, MA
Lenox Arts Festival, Lenox, MA
1984 Phillip Barber Gallery, Becket, MA
Church Street Cafe, Lenox, MA
Hopetown Gallery, Hopetown, Bahamas

PUBLICATIONS

- 2006 Robert Pincus, *In the Spirit of Velasquez*, The San Diego Union-Tribune

COLLECTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

- Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, San Jose, CA
Opus West, San Jose, CA
Adobe Systems Inc., San Jose, CA
N.E.C. Electronics Inc. Mountain View, CA
The Indus Group, San Francisco, CA
Nordstrom, San Francisco, CA and Canada
Kaiser Permanente, San Raphael and Santa Rosa, CA
Sutro and Company, Santa Rosa, CA
Berkshire Bank and Trust, Pittsfield, MA
Great Barrington Savings Bank, Great Barrington, MA
El Camino Hospital, Mountain View, CA
Bloomindales, San Francisco, CA and New York, NY
Horseshoe Casino, Cincinnati, OH
Saint Regis Hotel, Park City, Utah
Opus West, San Jose, CA
El Camino Hospital, Mountain View, CA
Robert Allen Fine Art, San Francisco, CA
Nordstrom, San Francisco, CA
William Blue, Morro Bay, CA
Gray Hartley, Nipomo, CA
Roosevelt family, NY

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TEACHING

- 1995-present Private Painting, Freestone Studio: Freestone, CA and Galiano Island, BC
- 1995-present Retreats in Tuscany, Italy and Andros, Greece
- 1994-2004 Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA
- 1990-1996 Sonoma State University, Extended Education Department, Rohnert Park, CA
- 1995-1998 Sebastopol Center for the Arts, Sebastopol, CA
- 1980-1987 Heartwood Owner-Builder School, Washington, MA
- 1980-1987 Becket Arts Center of the Hilltowns, Becket, MA