

PRESS RELEASE

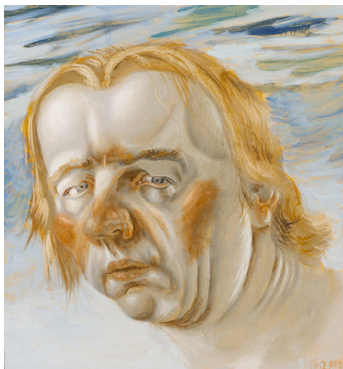
Philip Akkerman *1, 2, 3*
Maria Chevská *From the diary of a fly*

7 June – 13 July, 2013
Wednesday-Saturday, 12-6pm, and by appointment

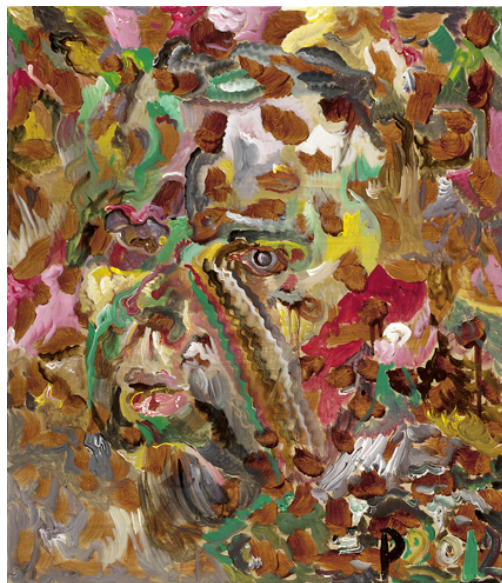
Private view: Thursday 6 June 6-8pm

Andrew Mummery is pleased to announce the second in the series of ongoing dialogues central to the exhibition programme at Mummery + Schnelle's new gallery space.

A juxtaposition of the works of Philip Akkerman and Maria Chevská raises questions about the nature of studio painting and the implications of working in series. Both artists concern themselves with authorship and the performative in painting, and to put their works in dialogue invites reflection on both the medium's historicity and its contemporary status.



Philip Akkerman
Self Portrait No. 142, 2010
27 x 25 cm



Philip Akkerman
Self Portrait No. 90, 2012
50 x 43 cm

*Our time gets to be veiled, compromised
By the portrait's will do endure. It hints at
Our own, which we were hoping to keep hidden.*

John Ashbery. From "Self-portrait in a Convex Mirror".
Reprinted in *John Ashbery Selected Poems*. Carcanet Press.

The title of Philip Akkerman's exhibition, *1, 2, 3*, is a reference to the way that the exhibition is installed and to the technique that the artist employs. On one wall is a single painting of unprecedented scale in Akkerman's practice. On another are two works, one made in 2002 the other in 2012, but both painted in a similar style. On the adjacent wall are three paintings in very contrasting styles. Previous exhibitions of Akkerman's work in London have emphasised its seriality, but here the viewer is asked to look at the works as individual paintings as well as related statements.

There are two constants in Akkerman's work. The first is technique: a traditional one of building up the painting in layers, starting with a neutral ground colour on which the image is drawn, followed by the addition of grisaille - an under-painting, usually in shades of grey - which is crucial for giving unity, volume and depth to the composition. It is the grisaille that gives Akkerman the freedom to paint exactly as he likes, and to express whatever he wants in the final layer of oil paint. For him, painting is anarchistic, a question of the freedom of individual expression.

The second constant in Akkerman's work is his subject matter – his own face. Since 1981 Akkerman has painted over 3,000 self-portraits. He insists, however, that his paintings are not about himself but about what we, as human beings, are. How is existence possible, he asks? How are we here? This is the paradox of Akkerman's work, by painting himself he is painting all of us. He seems to be questioning artistic authorship as an expression of individual will, while at the same time appearing to endorse it wholeheartedly.



Maria Chevka
From the diary of a fly [Parts 1] No (iii) 2013
14 x 14 x 14 cm



Maria Chevka
From the diary of a fly [Parts 3] No (i), 2013
76 x 61 cm

Maria Chevska's exhibition will contain works from her new series *From the diary of a fly*, which is made up of paintings and small collage/paper sculptures displayed on individual plinths. The title is taken from that of a short piano piece by Béla Bartók. The music describes the struggle of a fly to free itself – an agitator that escapes its predicted demise. Another source for Chevska are two short stories by Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis* and *Josephine the Singer*. The changes of scale and perspective described in these stories, and reflected in Chevska's work, mean that established framing devices – social, political, conceptual and physical – are jeopardised.

The paintings in the *From the Diary of a Fly* series are derived from reproductions of Russian icons. Chevska has taken details and colours from these and used them as the basis of her compositions. The original source material is, however, difficult to see. The fragments have been exaggerated and distorted, shrunk and expanded in the act of painting. Chevska has spoken of wanting to make the paint "eventful", the viewer able to see how the paintings "got there". They are made quickly, although some are repeatedly painted over, and the temporal aspect of them is important.

A different sense of time is evoked in her collage/paper sculptures. These mimic large structures and the classic primal forms of high modernist architecture and sculpture, but they are small and handmade. Simultaneously an inside and an outside, hand-sized, they explore macro and micro perspectives, zooming to near and far space. Chevska sees them as drawings in space rather than models and as defamiliarising places we know. They often incorporate pages and papers from books printed in Eastern Europe that Chevska was given as a child. The objects become, therefore, an individual's encounter with history, a slice of past reality cut from time and pasted into the present.

Notes on the Artists

Philip Akkerman

Born in Vaassen in The Netherlands in 1957 he now lives and works in The Hague. Since 1981 he has only painted self-portraits – a continuous project altered daily. Copies of the book *2314: Philip Akkerman 2314 Self Portraits 1981 – 2005*, which reproduces every self-portrait Akkerman made between 1981 are available from Mummery + Schnelle.

Maria Chevska

Born, and living and working, in London she is a professor of fine art at the Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art, Oxford. Copies of the monograph on her work, *Vera's Room: The Art of Maria Chevska*, are available from Mummery + Schnelle.

For further information, please contact Mummery + Schnelle:
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Forthcoming exhibitions at Mummery + Schnelle:

Gallery closed

August

Marek Piasecki

5 September – 12 October

Stuart Brisley

16 October – 30 November