

## PRESS RELEASE

GALLERY ISABELLE VAN DEN EYNDE

**ABDELKADER BENCHAMMA & JESSICA MEIN****CHROMOPHOBIA****19 June – 28 July 2013**

In the works of Jessica Mein and Abdelkader Benchamma, colour and form endeavor to organize reality, but can only accomplish their work by capitalizing on the attractive force that images have on the human psyche. For David Batchelor, author of *Chromophobia*, colour can possess the capacity to affect perception and similarly to be affected or moulded by our gaze. In this show, titled after Batchelor's book, the works attend to the transmission, circulation and adaptation of visual culture to manipulate and reconstruct reality.

São Paulo was the first city outside the communist world to put into effect a radical ban on outdoor advertising in 2007, with the mayor stating that 'The Clean City Law came from a necessity to combat pollution...We decided that we should start ... with the most conspicuous sector – visual pollution'.

Jessica Mein's collages comprise salvaged billboards sheets that she hole-punches and collages by hand, and represent an interruption to the city's elimination of billboards that reconstitutes those memories as contemporary art. The clean lines and vibrant colors of mass marketing materials are further dislodged by imperfections in the sheets themselves, the results of mechanical errors in the production process.

By reconstructing the billboards out of such basic constituent elements - collaged cut out circles of color from discarded material - Mein draws attention to the smallest controllable element of a picture represented in digital printing or display device; the pixel. Mein unmoors these elements of colour from their original purpose to reconstitute them as art.

Abdelkader Benchamma's 'Blue Beam Project' draws into the visual realm conspiracy theories of a NASA satellite project that purports to use projections to instill a global panic. Benchamma presents video projections and drawings to reveal how such invasive use of technology capitalizes on the contagious qualities of fear and paranoia to reconfigure social relations and human perception.

Within the exhibition several videos interrupt the works on paper and collage. A concatenation of static repeats itself endlessly in Benchamma's video, echoing the hypnotizing methodology in the original Blue Beam Project. In Mein's videos she presents densely layered stop motion animation projects. *Billboard* depicts a laborer ascending and descending a ladder as he pastes sheets to an advertising board. The video, projected onto a crumbled piece of paper, continually refers to its source. The second video, *Meronomero*, reconstitutes the discarded billboard as an animated and live object.

Benchamma's aesthetic austerity becomes complicit with a modality of control reflected in the

works' subject: a mass manipulation device. His use of monochrome and line focuses attention on the absurd machinations of a paranoia-inducing laser, while for Mein the colour is a rather vital sign - she deconstructs the object, and renders it through its units of color. These are in turn re-pasted to reconstitute the image and offer an additive quality that exceeds the billboard's defunct status as advertising detritus. Both the works of Benchamma and Mein in this show retrieve, highlight, and challenge the intent of their images in their original social realms.

*Abdelkader Benchamma (b. France 1975 to Algerian parents) lives and works in Montpellier. He completed his studies at the École Supérieure des Beaux Arts de Paris in 2003. In 2011, Benchamma participated in the 'Future of a Promise' exhibition at the Venice Biennale, and was commissioned for the 'Told Untold Retold' exhibition at the Mathaf Museum, Doha, Qatar. He has had solo exhibitions across Europe as well as in Asia, and has works in public collections, namely the FRAC Languedoc-Roussillon, the Musée de Beaux Arts-Orléans and Artothèque de Pessac in France. Benchamma is currently participating in the exhibition 'The Immigrants' at the Venice Biennale, curated by Frederico Luger.*

*Jessica Mein (b. São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works between New York, São Paulo and Dubai. She has exhibited internationally, in solo exhibition as well as group at the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Germany, Museo Tamayo de Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico; and The Street Files Biennial El Museo del Barrio, New York, among others. Her MFA is from Hunter College, New York, and her BA is from Duke University. Her work has entered numerous collections, including that of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the Julia Stoschek Collection, Germany.*

**For more information, please contact Minnie McIntyre by email ([minnie@ivde.net](mailto:minnie@ivde.net)) or phone (+971 4 323 5052). The Gallery is open from Saturday to Thursday 10am to 6pm.**