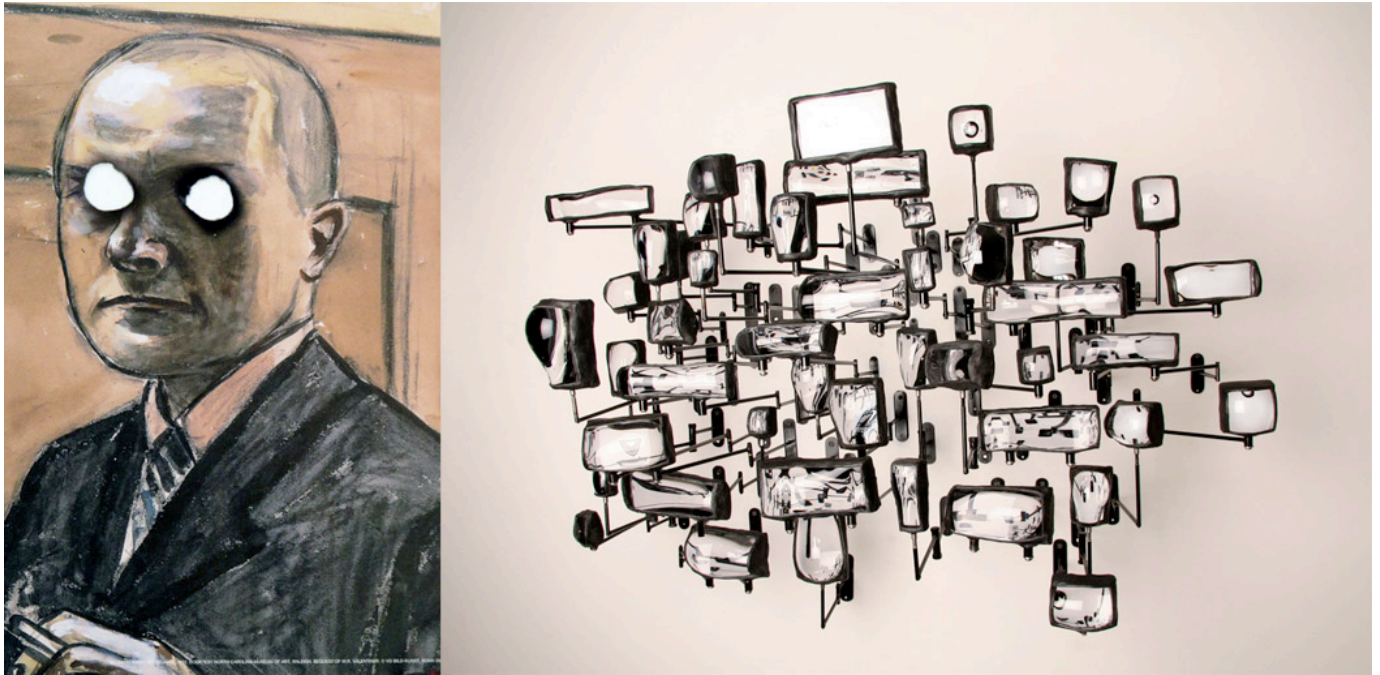


# MARTOS GALLERY

540 WEST 29TH STREET NEW YORK NEW YORK 10001

TEL 212.560.0670 FAX 212.560.0671 MARTOSGALLERY.COM



Left: Ben Berlow, *Untitled*, 2005, burned card, 8 ½ x 6 inches

Right: Graham Caldwell, *Glimpse Mechanism*, 2010, glass, epoxy, steel, hardware, 35 x 44 x 22 inches

## Ben Berlow – Graham Caldwell

Organized by Bob Nickas

February 4th - March 13th, 2010

Opening reception: Thursday, February 4th, 2010 from 6 to 8 pm

This exhibition is dedicated to Salvador Martos. (Feb 3, 1960 - Oct 14, 2009)

Martos Gallery is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of works by Ben Berlow and Graham Caldwell, organized by Bob Nickas.

Ben Berlow's works on paper are mostly abstract meditations on the act of painting and drawing as a spontaneous event. His history as a writer of short prose and poetry links his visual art with the inscription of language, as if painting is a kind of automatic writing. Berlow works on found pieces of paper, including newspaper, exhibition announcements and the envelopes in which they were mailed, as well as on pages torn from old books. Gesture, chance, and accident are welcomed, and he, like a number of other artists working today – foremost among them Richard Aldrich, Xylor Jane, Chris Martin, and Josh Smith – can be thought of as an inside outsider, someone who is well-aware of contemporary art and art history and at the same time inhabits a world of his or her own making. Historical figures such as Blinky Palermo and Richard Tuttle also inevitably come to mind. The breadth of Berlow's visual repertoire encompasses Dada, Surrealism, Expressionism, lyrical abstraction, Minimal, and Tantric art. His work is almost always modest in scale, relating the paper to something held in the hand, something meant to be perceived in close proximity. He foreshortens the space between surface and viewer, an intimacy that is part of his subject matter as well. There is humor and pathos, elegance and irreverence, and a continuous will to misfit.

The work of Graham Caldwell, with craft as central to his endeavor, might also register as somehow inside and outside at the same time. His sculptural practice is based on hand-blown glass, and he produces works that often feature a constellation of elements, both large and small, with myriad associations – to science, science fiction, and worlds both natural and unnatural, molecular and menacing: stalactites, crystalline structures, teardrops, arteries, bulbs, globes, convex and concave mirrors, antlers, talons, claws. Although they are materially fragile, some of Caldwell's works appear dangerous, capable of drawing blood. They are both beautiful and gnarly, able to attract viewers and to keep them at a distance. If it's difficult to link Caldwell to other contemporary artists, or even to a history of artists employing mirrors and glass, it's precisely because his work doesn't immediately remind us of things we've seen before. Although his mirrored pieces have an affinity with the *Narcissus Garden* of Yayoi Kusama, and his glass sculpture with the work of Josiah McElheny, as they take perception elsewhere, positing a world that extends from the work and the body outwards, Caldwell's is a more fragmented world, one that can only be perceived discontinuously. In terms of what has come before, his work in glass – forensic, cool, and clear – seems utterly alien and seductive.

Ben Berlow was born in 1980 in Los Angeles. He has had one-person exhibitions at Parade / Wharf Road Project in London, 2008, and at Jack Hanley Gallery in New York, 2009. He lives and works in Brooklyn.

Graham Caldwell was born in Philadelphia in 1973. Selected one-person exhibitions include Addison/Ripley Fine Art, Washington, DC, 2003; Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA, 2005; Bank, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, 2007, and G Fine Art, Washington, DC, 2009. He lives and works in Brooklyn.