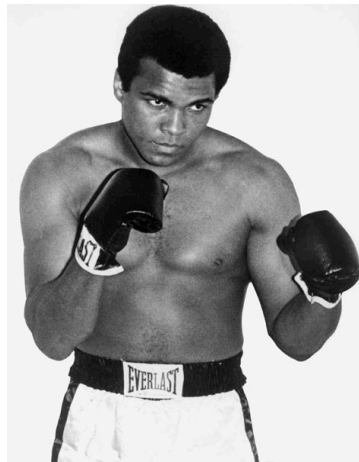


Press Release:

CASSIUS CLAY



**Coco Crampton
Mark Essen
Matthias Merkel Hess**

OPENING RECEPTION: 6.30-8.30PM, THURSDAY, 2ND OCTOBER 2014

3rd – 25TH OCTOBER 2014

*84 HATTON GARDEN
LONDON EC1N 8JR*

OPENING HOURS: WEDNESDAY – SATURDAY, 12-6PM OR BY APPOINTMENT

Marcelle Joseph Projects is pleased to present *Cassius Clay*, an exhibition of ceramic work made by an international selection of artists who bring a criticality to the history and materiality of ceramics with their varied practices.

'The fight is won or lost far away from witnesses – behind the lines, in the gym, and out there on the road, long before I dance under those lights.' Muhammad Ali

Not unlike Cassius Clay, these artists play dirty, challenging the limits of the material of clay in the making stage of their artworks. These battles with materiality are won in the studio not the exhibition space. For this exhibition, the sculptures are presented on the floor, on custom-made tables and on the wall, removing any analogy to the traditional craft heritage of clay and allowing the objects to either “dance under the lights” or brawl with each other.

Mark Essen's ceramic handbags and other objects in the show explore the capricious whims of popular culture and social idealism, aiming to give new meaning to the obsolete and highlight the gulf between function and non-function. Coco Crampton's new hand-thrown ceramic works attached to digital prints as well as upholstered denim are perfectly poised on the boundary between tradition and modernity and explore her continued interest in materials and processes.

Riffing on the Readymade and infused with a throwback sense of humour, Matthias Merkel Hess's work consists of a diverse collection of ceramic replicas of disposable and downmarket food containers (such as a plastic milk crate or a travel coffee mug) as well as dated memory objects (such as an Original Mr. Coffee machine or a 1950s Oster Beehive Blender) that shift with their subtle shape differentiation and their improbable colours, some shiny and drippy and others matte and chalky.

Coco Crampton (born 1983, London) lives and works in London after graduation from the Royal Academy Schools in London earlier this year. Crampton completed her BA in Fine Art from Norwich School of Art and Design in 2005. She has exhibited recently at Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham (2014), Belmacz Gallery, London (two-person show with Jonathan Baldock, 2014), Marcelle Joseph Projects, Ascot (2014), Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (with Caroline Achaintre and Aaron Angell among others, 2012), Norwich Castle Museum, Norwich (2010) and the OUTPOST Gallery (solo show and group show selected by Gavin Turk, both in 2007). Crampton's work will be featured in an upcoming solo show in 2015 at the Minorities Galleries in Colchester.

Mark Essen (born 1984, Reigate, UK) is a British artist living and working in London after completing his MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art earlier this year. He graduated from Birmingham City University with a BA in Fine Art in 2007. His work has been recently exhibited at *Bloomberg New Contemporaries* (selected by Ryan Gander, Chantal Joffe and Nathaniel Mellors), Spike Island, Bristol and ICA, London (2013); *Members' Show* (selected by Ruth Ewan), OUTPOST Gallery, Norwich (2012); *Epochal Descent*, Horatio Jr., London (2012); *The Curator's Egg, Altera Pars*, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London (2012); and *Slipped*, Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge (2012). Essen undertook a residency at Wysing Arts Centre in 2011. He is also a founding member of Grand Union, a gallery and studio complex run by a small group of artists and curators and located in Digbeth, Birmingham's cultural quarter.

Matthias Merkel Hess (born 1978, Cedar Rapids, Iowa) is an American artist living and working in Los Angeles. Merkel Hess studied Fine Art at UCLA where he graduated with an MFA in 2010. Recent solo exhibitions include those at Volume Gallery, Chicago and Burnet Gallery, Minneapolis in 2014; Salon 94 Freemans, New York and James Harris Gallery, Seattle in 2013; and ACME, Los Angeles in 2014 and 2011. Important group shows include: *More Material* (curated by Duro Olowu), Salon 94 Bowery, New York (2014); *Corporeal Impulse* (curated by Allyson Unzicker), Vincent Price Art Museum, Monterey Park, CA (2013); *The Cat Show* (curated by Rhonda Lieberman), White Column, New York (2013); *Faux Real*, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA (2013); *SUM* (alongside William J. O'Brien and Arlene Shechet), Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS (2012); *Venice Beach Biennial* (curated by Ali Subotnik), Venice, CA (2012); and *Paul Clay*, Salon 94 Bowery, New York (2011). Merkel Hess is represented by Salon 94 in New York and ACME in Los Angeles.

84 Hatton Garden is a temporary art exhibition space managed and curated by Marcelle Joseph Projects and sponsored by the House of Kipp. This building will be demolished and converted into luxury flats in January 2015. Nearest tube stations are Farringdon (3 minute walk) and Chancery Lane (5 minute walk).

Notes to Editors

CASSIUS CLAY is presented by Marcelle Joseph Projects. Founded in 2011, Marcelle Joseph Projects is a nomadic curatorial platform devoted to promoting contemporary art in different venues or found spaces across the United Kingdom and internationally. For more information, go to www.marcellejoseph.com or email on info@marcellejoseph.com or call on 07971 580 572.