



Beau Chamberlain
New Paintings

November 1, 2008 – January 3, 2009

CTRL gallery is pleased to present new paintings by NYC-based artist Beau Chamberlain.

Since his last exhibition at CTRL in April 2007, Chamberlain has continued his fantasy-filled exploration of the natural world and its universal narratives.

Borrowing from every nook and cranny of biological knowledge, Chamberlain invents ecosystems that are home to diverse, hybrid species. Exotic predators lure their prey and parasites cling to their elaborately patterned hosts. Other newly minted creatures just go about the business of survival in their ornate environments. Chamberlain's invented worlds and the ease with which we are drawn into them demonstrates our common need to transcend, if only momentarily, the tedium and demands of our everyday life. In this sense his paintings share something in common with every form of spiritual transport; the utopian desire for the 'somewhere else'.

Born and raised among the natural splendor of the US Pacific Northwest coast, Chamberlain's current life in the city creates a vacuum of desire for the experience of nature. In stark contrast to the artifice of human activity and regulation, Chamberlain's intricate, imaginative paintings seem to grow organically from the primeval soil of play. The rules are "every creature for himself" and the result is a perfect ecological balance and a seemingly effortless emergence of spontaneous order.

Having been seduced by the paintings' satiny smooth surfaces, expanses of calm color and imaginative scenarios it's easy to not look any deeper, but there are compelling ideas latent in these works. Chamberlain carries forth a long tradition in art and literature of metaphorical comparison between human and animal societies. One relevant example can be found in Bernard de Mandeville's 1714 poem *The Fable of the Bees*, in which the effects of various forms of government test the productive dynamics of a beehive. Almost 300 years after Mandeville, Chamberlain approaches similar questions with his paintings. How does regulation promote or hinder prosperity? Is human design a precondition for meaningful human action or are we as a species more instinctual than we give ourselves credit for? Is corruption inevitable when every individual acts in pure self-interest, or can this lead to the greater good of society as a whole?

Whether Chamberlain's paintings provide a means for transcendental escape or function as a painterly thesis on social and political theory (or both, or neither) they remain above all, paintings. And his love for/addiction to painting is evident in every lyrical passage and delightful flourish in the strangely familiar worlds he creates.

Chamberlain was born in Portland, Oregon and received his BFA from Pratt Institute in 2003. He was recently included in the 183rd Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Art at the National Academy Museum, New York, NY, Denmark. Previous exhibitions include The Vejle KunstMuseum (Jutland, Denmark), CTRL (Houston), Mogadishni (Copenhagen), Project 4 (Washington DC), Jessica Murray Projects (NYC) and Nicole Klagsbrun (NYC). Chamberlain lives and works in New York City.

CTRL Gallery is located at 3907 Main Street, 1 block south of Alabama in Midtown Houston. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am - 6pm. For more information, please contact the gallery at 713-523-CTRL(2875) or visit www.ctrlgallery.com