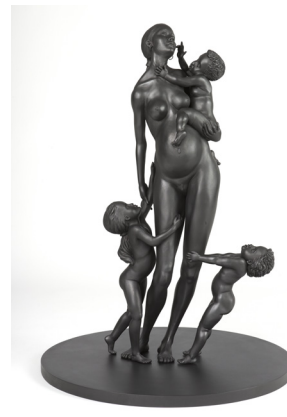


36, rue de Seine  
75006 Paris-FR  
T.+33(0)1 46 34 61 07  
F.+33(0)1 43 25 18 80  
www.galerie-vallois.com  
info@galerie-vallois.com

## Keith Tyson Contemporary Grotesques

Boris Achour **FR**  
Pilar Albarracín **ES**  
Gilles Barbier **FR**  
Julien Berthier **FR**  
Julien Bismuth **FR**  
Mike Bouchet **US**  
Alain Bublex **FR**  
Massimo Furlan **CH**  
Richard Jackson **US**  
Adam Janes **US**  
Martin Kersels **US**  
Paul McCarthy **US**  
Jeff Mills **US**  
Joachim Mogarra **FR**  
Arnold Odermatt **CH**  
Henrique Oliveira **BR**  
Keith Tyson **GB**  
Jacques Villeglé **FR**  
Olav Westphalen **DE**  
Winshluss **FR**  
Virginie Yassef **FR**



10  
June  
—  
30  
July  
2011

**OPENING**

Thursday 9 June  
2011

**FORTHCOMING  
EXHIBITION**

9 September - 8 October  
Henrique Oliveira

Whenever I see Keith Tyson's *Studio Wall Drawings* and other works by him, I can't help thinking of Rauschenberg. Might we be in the presence here of the leading heir to Bob and his *Combines*? Not that there's a formal relationship: it's more like an attitude, an ethic, a shared approach. Whatever, Tyson's not bothered by family trees, given that, as he puts it, "The infinite lineage of an artist goes back to the Big Bang." He is, he says, fascinated by the deterministic dogmatism of some scientists: "The belief that every event and action, even one as complex as a Mozart concerto or a terrorist attack, is the product of hydrogen atoms colliding when the Big Bang happened." Let me explain: one day I asked Rauschenberg why, in a photo that was part of one of his pictures, a photo of a marathon runner arriving in a stadium, he'd surrounded the athlete with a broad black line. His answer was, "Because for him it's over, whereas for the public in the stands it'll never be over." Tyson shares this style of thinking with the American master. He's part of a genealogy mixing politics, economics, phenomenology, art history and pure and behavioural science. But what are the gaps to be bridged? How to connect the individual and the collective, art and life, high and low? For Tyson the issue is how to perceive the "invisible forces" linking the psychological terrain of the individual to the physical substrate of all. An enormous question that Warhol's "Everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes" puts very sharply. Tyson makes no bones about it: his "grotesque" figures are "defences

against accepting that each person has an identical character." He testifies with a kind of baroque lyricism to the infinite multitude of singularities. Whence the hurly-burly of works that are absolutely not intended to enthrone the individual as self-sufficient. When you create carbon figures you're returning to the issue of the statue - its erection, its individuation - *ab ovo*, at the cosmic level of matter.

As a redoubtable phenomenologist/physicist, Tyson sees behaviour as indissociable from the carbon human beings are mainly made up of. In Deleuzian terms - we're not surprised to learn he's read *A Thousand Plateaus* - this could signify: how are we to match up molar systems (enormous, complex images shot through with cultural symbolism) and molecular productions (intensive, central to desire and beyond representation). I also find myself thinking of today's "string theory", which says that space-time's rending between astrophysics (Einstein's relativity) and microbiology (to do with quantum physics) has now been resolved. A single theory covering the entire Multiverse! This is exactly the line Tyson's work is following, and with no formal reductionism. Taking an overall look at the oeuvre, we're struck by its extreme diversity, by a jumble of images and forces that endanger any attempt at formalist unicity. In his case every gap remains visible, but is pacified. A geisha can look at a walrus while jotting some haiku or other. A skeletal dancer can reveal a graceful silhouette reminiscent

# VALLOIS

## GALERIE

Georges-Philippe  
& Nathalie  
Vallois

36, rue de Seine  
75006 Paris-FR  
T.+33(0)1 46 34 61 07  
F.+33(0)1 43 25 18 80  
www.galerie-vallois.com  
info@galerie-vallois.com

Boris Achour <sup>FR</sup>  
Pilar Albarracín <sup>ES</sup>  
Gilles Barbier <sup>FR</sup>  
Julien Berthier <sup>FR</sup>  
Julien Bismuth <sup>FR</sup>  
Mike Bouchet <sup>US</sup>  
Alain Bublex <sup>FR</sup>  
Massimo Furlan <sup>CH</sup>  
Richard Jackson <sup>US</sup>  
Adam Janes <sup>US</sup>  
Martin Kersels <sup>US</sup>  
Paul McCarthy <sup>US</sup>  
Jeff Mills <sup>US</sup>  
Joachim Mogarra <sup>FR</sup>  
Arnold Odermatt <sup>CH</sup>  
Henrique Oliveira <sup>BR</sup>  
Keith Tyson <sup>GB</sup>  
Jacques Villeglé <sup>FR</sup>  
Olav Westphalen <sup>DE</sup>  
Winshluss <sup>FR</sup>  
Virginie Yassef <sup>FR</sup>

of William Hogarth's theories of the beautiful - Hogarth having demonstrated that only a twisting, scrolling line could accede to beauty. So "Contemporary Grotesques", the title of the present exhibition, should make us think not of some parodic ugliness, but of the opposite, and thus provide access to the weird aesthetic of the twisted. For Tyson, what's more, "grotesque" is - no accident, this - practically synonymous with "Gothic". For him these figures verging on the monstrous are very close to the gargoyles you see on cathedrals, driven by a violence they are spitting out. Let's not forget that Gothic line was and remains a complex, excessive, tangled one. A line with no beginning (the Celts?) and no end (Art Nouveau?), which someone like Wim Delvoye is now using to produce emulsive mixes of industry and the sacred. A line of tree diagrams and networks, of germination and death. The Gothic style is a mixer that suits Tyson: "I see no dichotomy between a scientific and a political reading of my works. I see the work as an embodying of the two on equal terms."

For Tyson the universe is expansive in the sense both of intergalactic vastness and the matter particles are made of. A "soup", he calls it, just as Gilles Barbier does. But far from letting himself drown in this exponential broth, in which microscopes and telescopes lapse into giddy intoxication, Tyson stresses that for him multiplicity can only be attained via subtraction. The work of art, as he sees it, never hinges on addition. Undeterred by paradox, he even describes himself as a Minimalist! Declarations like this are a delight in their clarification of the paradox that is art: "The big thing about being an artist," he says, "is to be able to act inconsistently. You can have two contradictory ideas in your mind and believe both of them. Science is a discipline that doesn't let you do that."

Pierre Sterckx

10  
June  
—  
30  
July  
2011

### OPENING

Thursday 9 June  
2011

### FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION

9 September - 8 October  
Henrique Oliveira

