

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

9 SEPTEMBER – 1 NOVEMBER 2009

ASSEMBLY

CARAGH THURING

"...The painting portrays two young men, deeply engaged with each other, but words don't seem to pass their lips. One of them is playing a string instrument, his face turned to his companion. His central position within the image frame accentuates his importance within the image. A ray of sunlight captures the bright red colour of his rich garment, while leaving the identity of his face illusive by a shadow. His hands are just about to hit a cord on the strings and are the only parts of his body that are granted illumination.

Between the two men and the spectator the painter positioned two female graces. One is leaning with her right hand on the edge of a stone basin, in which she is just about to pour the water from a transparent jug, held in her other hand. The second figure is seated, facing the two men with her back to the spectator. Supported by her left arm she delicately holds a flute in her right hand. The scene describes a moment that is charged with anticipation: it is clear that the two youngsters didn't come up with a suitable composition yet. As a mythological representation of Inspiration, the seated female patiently waits for her cue to play. The figure at the basin is just about to release her water – representing the Source of Creation. Nevertheless, up until now, *that* moment lies still in the future.

This complex group-interaction clearly distinguishes the painting of this (still very young) painter as an academic masterpiece. The pictorial timing, its graceful composition and its depiction of classic 'Bodily-beauty' of the female nudes correspond with the standards set by *Enlightenment* thinkers such as Lessing: standards that aimed to demarcate Art from Nature. *Pastoral Concert* continues to transcend these standards by showing what is lost within this process. Apart from this celebration of Art we encounter a surrounding landscape in close proximity. Both scenes are set apart by the sharp contours of a sloping hillside. Behind it, one encounters an archaic landscape covered in sunlight: a flock of sheep is led into the frame of the image by their shepherd – entering the early Renaissance composition of different 'Coulisses' and the blue horizon of its *Sfumato* perspective. It is a blissful scene, yet painted in a considerably ordinary fashion compared to its artificial counterpart. Even though the image frame suggests uniting both places of beauty, one of them is just too unusual *not* to be considered superior.

In so doing, the background of the painting suggests a pre-artistic state: the Pastoral 'source' that has lead to the Culture in the foreground. Its distinct pictorial disadvantage draws the attention of the spectator back to the things he has left out during his aesthetic identification. A play between visibility and invisibility is introduced between history and progress. Natural beauty was, just as the course of history, never really lost and had been present within the image all along. However, this is not the final conclusion of the painting. Titian continues its aesthetic evolution by adding another (more conceptual) level. As mentioned before, the timing in which the subject is depicted suggests that the image is a transitional one – leading to an even more profane place of beauty. The painting doesn't portray *what* is created, but instead shows creation *itself*. *Pastoral Concert* leads to a place that is, as yet, indescribable – without words or image – to which this masterpiece is its visual overture."

Extract from **Pastoral Concert – and other beautiful places**
by Bart van der Heide, August 2009 (The full text is available from the gallery.)

Simon Preston is pleased to present Caragh Thuring's first solo exhibition in New York titled *Assembly*, which opens to the public on Wednesday, 9 September and runs until Sunday, 1 November, 2009.

Caragh Thuring was born in Brussels and now lives and works in London. Recent shows include a solo exhibition at Thomas Dane Gallery, London in April 2009. She will be included in *Newspeak*, an exhibition of New British Art at The State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, Russia from October 2009 - January 2010.

The gallery is located at 301 Broome Street between Forsyth and Eldridge Streets. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 6m. The nearest subway stops are Grand Street on the B/D lines and Delancey Street on the F/J/M/Z lines. For more information please contact office@simonprestongallery.com or call the gallery on 212- 431-1105.