

**JAN FRANK: PAINTINGS**

January 26 – February 25, 2017



*African Wish*, 1992, Alkyd, Oil, Ink on Plywood, 96 x 60 inches

*I don't have a tattoo. I could never think of anything I wouldn't get sick of. If I had to get a tattoo, I'd probably reproduce a Jan Frank work, maybe on my back or upper arm. Nobody would fuck with somebody with a tattoo like that. Or ask you what it means. They'd be afraid you'd tell them.*

— Glenn O'Brien

**NAHMAD CONTEMPORARY** is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of American-based painter Jan Frank (born 1951). Curated by writer Glenn O'Brien, the exhibition will present a survey of works produced over the past twenty-five years.

Whether Frank works on plywood or canvas, in ink, oil, or acrylic, by projection, silkscreen, or through tracing the lines of a live model, the true foundation of the artist's medium is the history of art. Born in Amsterdam, Frank's Dutch heritage and roots in abstract art are evident throughout his prolific oeuvre. While Frank's gestures may formally recall an expressionist aesthetic, akin to that of Willem de Kooning and Jackson Pollock, his nuanced process depends heavily on the tenets of postmodern thought, embracing strategies of appropriation, citation, trace, and erasure. Making the distinction between Frank and his expressionist predecessors, O'Brien states that "while Frank's work may

appear spontaneous, the way Pollock's does, it is actually spontaneity refined and perfected... He is not an action painter. He's an action/reaction painter."

The exhibition will begin with the artist's series of works on plywood (1992–1998), in which he used sheets of standard manufactured wood veneer as a "sketch book" for an archive of visual sources that he appropriated from the history of modern art. Using an overhead projector to cast fragments of his Modernist predecessors' linear motifs onto the plywood, Frank deployed an 8-foot-long ink-laden brush to trace the marks and gestures of such masters as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Phillip Guston, and Louise Bourgeois, among others.

As epic continuations of his initial foray into appropriation, the artist's most recent series of silkscreen works on linen (2015-present) will also be featured. In these works, the artist replaced his projector-guided brushstrokes with silkscreened prints to cast complex networks of culled passages from art history onto supports. Through selection, appropriation, manipulation, and erasure, Frank orchestrates complex compositions founded in the sinuous lines of history.

In the final series to be featured, the *Nudes* (2011–present), Frank addresses the quintessential subject of art history: the female form. For these works, the artist sketched countless movements from a live model and then distilled the relationship between movement and form into refined marks. Summoning the anatomical fragmentation of de Kooning, Frank uses these organic lines to traverse the boundary between figuration and abstraction, appropriation and original.

Jan Frank was born in Amsterdam and lived in the Congo before his parents immigrated to the United States. He currently lives and works in New York City. Frank's works are in numerous public and private collections and he exhibits widely throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia. The artist's most recent exhibitions include Paul Kasmin, NYC (2011), Olsen / Irwin, Sydney, Australia (2012), and The Merchant House, Amsterdam (2013). This is his second show at Nahmad Contemporary.