

# SEANKELLY

Simmon, William J. "Action painting: The body electric," *Christie's*, February 2015.

## CHRISTIE'S *The Art People*

### *Action painting: The body electric*

Pushing the body in the service of art making has a storied history: Yves Klein's exemplary *Leap Into the Void* (1960), fakes a photographic depiction of the artist in flight, while contemporary practitioner Adam Putnam straps himself to ceilings like a macabre Christ figure, creating gestures that challenge the viewer's understanding of performance.

As performance art increasingly achieves notoriety as a genre of contemporary practice, thoughtful consideration should be given to artists whose work offers an exemplar for the possibilities of body-based plastic objects. The examination of the tradition continues with three artists, two of whom are currently enjoying exhibitions, and all of whom rather than seeking cold objectivity or hermetic detachment use their bodies to reach a conceptual place beyond the physical, perhaps indicative of a human obsession with just how far we can extend ourselves before breaking.

## Hugo McCloud



Hugo McCloud, whose work is on view at New York's Sean Kelly Gallery through March 14, uses industrial materials such as aluminum sheeting and roofing tar that require intense physical dexterity and labor to manipulate. These are combined with paint and the self-taught artist's own spin on woodblock printing to create pieces with a surface relief that seem to lie halfway between painting and sculpture.



Hugo McCloud, *Phaeton*, 2015.

Aluminum foil, aluminum coating and oil paint on paper. 49 1/4 x 70 3/16 x 2 in. (125.1 x 178.3 x 5.1 cm.)

© Hugo McCloud. Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York

'The work really requires movement,' says the 35-year-old. It 'requires a lot of physical effort in order to get that tactility.' The sizable wall pieces — currently selling in a range between \$18,000 and \$35,000 — flaunt visually arresting 3-D patterns that are some times punctuated by colorful paint, the remnants of abstract compositions studiously created on the object's ground. The artist mars the underpainting with the sheeting that is adhered to the surface with a blowtorch and then marked with artist-carved branding plates while still pliable. The paint merges with the industrial material, sometimes consumed by it; other times pumping beneath the topmost layer.

The visual analogy created is similar to markmaking on skin. 'Sometimes you have all the energy in the world, but there is definitely a physical battle,' says McCloud. 'But that's what makes the work the work. When the viewer comes in, they are definitely drawn to the energy that is put into these pieces.'

Top image: Hugo McCloud's studio, photo by Zoe Weber. Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York.