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ARTnews

Laurent Grasso

Bass Museum of Art

Miami Beach

Laurent Grasso is a time traveler. For this wondrous show, he interspersed a small selection of Renaissance and Baroque artworks from the Bass's permanent collection with his own recent works that respond to, borrow from, or recontextualize Renaissance-era iconography. Titled "Portrait of a Young Man," the exhibition embodied the spirit of curiosity and awe of that period—when science and art were intertwined fields of inquiry—while playfully challenging linear perceptions of time.

In several works from "Studies into the past," a series Grasso has intentionally left undated, he rendered variations on the classic scene of a figure on horseback gazing out at a distant vista. The artist worked with professional art restorers to create these paintings, with figures, trees, and slivers of landscape precisely reproduced from works by Fra Angelico, Botticelli, and Uccello, among others. Still, they are not entirely backward looking. In each of these scenes, Grasso has placed a mysterious, otherworldly object that hovers in the sky above the horseman. Embodying wonder, the uncanny apparitions seem to propel these paintings into an unknown future. A related digital video, titled *Psychokinesis* (2008), shows a boulder enigmatically rising and falling in vivid blue space.

Also on view was *1610* (2011), an ethereal wall-mounted array of 20 individual star-shaped forms constructed from glowing neon tubes inspired by a constellation sketch in a 1610 illustrated astronomical treatise by Galileo. Like the

PRIVATE COLLECTION, NEW YORK/COURTESY SEAN KELLY GALLERY, NEW YORK



Laurent Grasso, *Studies into the past*, n.d., oil on panel, 16½" x 14". Bass Museum of Art.

rest of Grasso's work, it occupies both past and future, melding visionary Renaissance ideas with thoroughly modern materials.

—Elisa Turner