

JOHN DANTE BIANCHI

UNAVOIDABLE ENCOUNTER

DENNY
GALLERY



John Dante Bianchi

Unavoidable Encounter

December 9, 2016 - January 22, 2017

Denny Gallery
261 Broome Street, New York, NY

DENNY GALLERY

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John Dante Bianchi: *Unavoidable Encounter*

December 9, 2016 - January 22, 2017

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JOHN DANTE BIANCHI
Unavoidable Encounter
Dec. 9, 2016 - Jan. 22, 2017

Gallery Statement

Unavoidable Encounter is an exhibition of new sculptural panels by John Dante Bianchi. His bodies of work- the Bruised Panels, Torqued Panels, and Relief Panels- refer in name to the physical process of their making. Bianchi's wall-based works are both sculpture and painting, emerging from the wall or built in many layers and exactly constructed all the way through, from stretcher to support to surface. Much of Bianchi's work explores the ideation of the piece as a body (an object) with a skin (a surface), which is exposed to forces of time and events leaving their mark. The Bruised Panels, for example, are speckled with colors that directly reference skin tones and bruises: pinks and blues and creams. They are built up in layers and sanded down to reveal textures and colors underneath. Bianchi's work encapsulates a sense of time within it, not only in the sense of process, but also in some of the materials he chooses, such as recycled redwood (the world's largest and longest-living trees) to make his freestanding sculptures.

John Dante Bianchi (b. 1978, Nashua, New Hampshire) received his BFA from Cooper Union and his MFA from Yale University. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He has exhibited at Galerie Derouillon in Paris, Tyler Wood Gallery in San Francisco, Thierry Goldberg Gallery in New York City, Signal Gallery in Brooklyn, Kai Matsumiya in New York City, and David Zwirner in New York City. He has received press coverage in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Architectural Digest*, *The Observer*, *VICE's The Creators Project*, *ARTNEWS*, *Interview Magazine*, *BOMB Magazine*, and *Blouin Artinfo*.

- Elizabeth Denny, November 2016













Catalog Essay

11.28.16-12.8.16
Visits

Frost Street. A studio, a wood shop, a basement apartment. I'm at John's two weeks before the opening. Light doesn't enter here. He's getting kicked out soon. Over the past five years he's constructed a workspace inseparable from his living space; past projects, experiments and forms-in-progress pile onto storage shelves built by hand. It's all his work and the work is everywhere. Both ends of the studio are crowded with material and sculptures pushed off to the side, either for derivation, deviation or lack of space. A piece from earlier this year sits in the corner--a resined slab of blubber, slippery and misshapen, impaled with two spears-like rods. Hunted whale or sea creature doesn't matter. It's raw. White twine twists around each spear, uncomfortably clean, too neat to be lodged into this glistening chunk of slain game. "John, this narwhal is fucked." We stare at it. It has a kind of energy that fuels the objects around it.

I walk over to a collection of crumpled aluminum plans for torqued panels. They're scattered across a tangle of yarn, half-trapped beneath a larger structure. It's the relic. Is that the name? I'm not sure, but I call it the relic. And he has yet to correct me. It's a piece that's been secreted away at every solo show he's had in the past ten years, hiding in air conditioner shafts or hanging in corners. I ask if it will be in this show, he says he's not sure yet. I almost trip over it. A row of the newly completed *Torqued Panels* lines the opposite wall, with two more unfinished versions leaning against it. The panels fold on top of themselves, peeling away from the support as if in slow motion. Roving, vulnerable, creased like pressed paper planes, they fold at different angles in multiple directions at once. They shift as you shift, destabilizing perceptions of what is or what should be still. The space is crawling with forms.

At the center of the studio is the centerpiece for the show, a glacial ring of foam and resin arranged in threes. Its smoothed form looks cool to the touch. You want to run your palm along the edge and trace the rise and fall of the ridges with your fingertips. Propped up nearby is a smaller, earlier model for this larger, later work--a single stalactite-construct smattered with concrete and plaster. A piece of wood juts out from its core like exposed bone after an accident. Almost instantly, this cruder version twists and complicates whatever surface concept of beauty you had taken for granted. You look again at the work you thought you had seen. The piece is dissected, fluidity interrupted, and the flawless exterior is wrecked with marks, skinned alive. You didn't notice these scabs before, and now they're all you see. Because John's work is never just beautiful, it is beautifully disturbed.

Broome Street. Two weeks after my visit, I'm at the opening. Works move from the floor to the wall. Crowds come in waves over the hours. I look at one of the *Bruised Panels* up close. The greens, blues and violets are deceptively pleasant. He's built up the surface with layers of pigment only to sand away at its aluminum skin, pressing into it, provoking it. The material responds to the body and collects the damage in pockmarks and scratches. Bruises are visual marks of tactile encounters. Something hurt you, touched you, impacted you. They carry the memory of that moment, they change with the healing, they change with the recovery, and then they disappear. "Hey John, where's the relic?" He laughs and tells me he tried to pull it out but it wouldn't budge. It was a sign, time to let go. I shrug. It's here anyway, how could it not be? The works in the gallery are formed and informed by those in the studio, they carry the weight of their impact. Just like a bruise that has disappeared. You know it was there. And beauty is only punctured skin deep.

-Laura Kenner, December 2016



Untitled (Torqued Panel #14), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
40 x 30 x 9 in/102 x 76 x 23 cm



Untitled (Torqued Panel #15), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
40 x 30 x 9 in/102 x 76 x 23 cm



Detail of *Untitled (Torqued Panel #14)* and *Untitled (Torqued Panel #15)*



Untitled (Torqued Panel #16), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
56 x 42 x 11 in/142 x 107 x 28 cm





Untitled (Based Figure #4), 2016
Aqua resin, EPS foam, and redwood
54 x 48 x 48 in/137 x 122 x 122 cm





Untitled (Bruised Panel #26), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
63 x 48 in/160 x 122 cm



Untitled (Bruised Panel #25), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
63 x 48 in/160 x 122 cm



Untitled (Torqued Panel #12), 2016
 Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
 32 x 24 x 13 in/81 x 61 x 33 cm



Untitled (Torqued Panel #13), 2016
 Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
 32 x 24 x 13 in/81 x 61 x 33 cm



Untitled (Torqued Panel #11), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
32 x 24 x 13 in/81 x 61 x 33 cm

Untitled (Torqued Panel #10), 2016
Acrylic and aluminum on plywood panel
40 x 30 x 9 in/102 x 76 x 23 cm





Artist Statement

For the past five years my work has explored the idea of trauma and its acute ability to foreground transformation, both positive and negative. I have created four related series that approach this exploration through various lenses. Each utilizes a combination of natural and synthetic materials to suggest the alchemical nature of transformation, both psychological and physical. These works have been shown in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Paris.

The first of these four series is my Excavated panel series which started in 2012. In this series, I use blank sheets of half-inch EPS foam which I attach to wood, frame-like panels. Working directly onto the EPS foam with acrylic paint, I mask out projected half-tones images taken from various sources. Once this step is complete, I then paint the entire image with white spray paint, prompting the process of decay when the two materials (paint and foam) violently react. The final surface of these works is craggy and textured, breaking down the original image into unpredictable and ghostly fragments recalling geology, time, history, memory and process all in one.

My torqued slab sculptures were shown with the excavated panels in 2013 at David Zwirner Gallery and Signal Gallery. These sculptures start out as figure sized monoliths systematically layered with colored paint and then blanched white. They are then cut and torqued into figurative poses referencing bodies in states ranging from writhing to relaxed. In the final stage of completion they are sanded down to reveal the layers of paint hidden below their surfaces. The result is a highly textured and colorful surface that references the traumatic spectrum of color that the body produces in moments of injury.

For several shows in 2014, I continued the transformation of the original torqued sculpture into my first series of “bruised panels”. Using the bruised spectrum of color that appears on the torqued slabs surfaces, I created flat “sculptures” where I pieced together multiple geometric panels of laminated aluminum and raw plywood in a Frankenstein-like manner. Once spliced together the pieces were layered with spray-paint and then blanched white. I then proceeded to sand back down into the pieces revealing the underlying geometric structures. After sanding I then re-apply layers of paint in a give and take process where I build up the surface with paint and then sand it back down, responding to the compositions and colors that reveal themselves.

Alongside the “bruised panels” I created a series of geologic sculptures referencing the cathedral like spires of burnt red wood tree stumps that I encountered first hand in the forests of northern California. Made from a concoction of actual red wood, foam, aqua-resin and pigmented plaster, their glacial appearance is at once natural and artificial, combining my interest in objects that appear to be both digitally produced and handmade, while also reflecting on the destructive forces that redwood trees rely on to reproduce.

Most recently I’ve been interested in distilling my work into singular objects that combine my explorations from the past several years. In these new works, which I call torqued panels, where I’ve taken the logic of the torqued slabs and the bruised panels and put them together into hybrid objects that appear to bend, fold and contort as if some traumatic and violent event has ripped them from their support. Made of aluminum mounted onto plywood they appear damaged but remain structural, geometric and crystalline while absorbing the organic, chaotic and unpredictable surface manipulation that I feel reflects the struggle between chaos and control that I feel is central my own lived experience.

- John Dante Bianchi, November 2016



JOHN DANTE BIANCHI CURRICULUM VITAE

Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY
Born in 1978 in Nashua, NH

EDUCATION

2008 Master of Fine Arts, Yale University, New Haven, CT
2003 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Cooper Union, New York, NY
2000 Parsons School of Design, New York, NY

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016 *Unavoidable Encounter*, Denny Gallery, New York, NY
So This is Permanent, Galerie Derouillon, Paris, France
2015 *John Dante Bianchi*, Tyler Wood Gallery, San Francisco, CA
2014 *John Dante Bianchi*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY
2013 *Dislocation Point*, Signal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
2012 *Betrayal Trauma*, Know More Games/Primetime, Brooklyn, NY
2010 *John Bianchi at Primetime*, Primetime, Brooklyn, NY
2005 *The Sky is a Big Responsibility*, Placemaker Gallery, Miami, FL
2004 *There was Heat by the Light of the Fire*, Placemaker Gallery, Miami, FL

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2016 *Verb List*, E. Tay Gallery, New York, NY
Session 2, BackSlash Gallery, Paris, France
The City & The City, Denny Gallery (Pop Up), New York, NY
John Bianchi and Guy Yanai, Galerie Derouillon, NADA New York, NY
WaterMark, Signal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Redux, Kai Matsumiya, New York, NY
2015 *Above and Below*, Galerie Derouillon, Paris, FR
2014 *To do as one would*, David Zwirner, New York, NY
Marquee Moon, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY
John Bianchi and Jeffrey Kessel, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York, NY
White and Black, Nancy Margolis Gallery, New York, NY
2013 *Middle Zone*, Projekt 722, Brooklyn, NY

2012 *Five Years Later*, Flinn Gallery, Greenwich, CT
Water Feature, WildLife Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Warm, Signal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
Hexis, Know More Games, Brooklyn, NY
The Brucennial, curated by BHQF, New York, NY
2011 *Darkroom*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Norfolk, Thierry Goldberg Projects, New York, NY
In Between the Sheets, curated by Irena Jurek, New York, NY
Lights America, curated by Jacques Vidal, Brooklyn, NY
Goodbye Space Shuttle, curated by Jason Mones, Brooklyn, NY
2010 *Albino Alligator*, Bodega, Philadelphia, PA
Shakeout, curated by Jessica Shaefer, Queens, NY
The Brucennial, Curated By BHQF, New York, NY
2009 *Dream Tigers*, Vaudville Park, Brooklyn NY
On From Here, Guild and Greyshkul, New York, NY
8 ½ x 11, James Fuentes, New York, NY
Smithumenta, Curated by BHQF, Brooklyn, NY
Pulp and Dagger, Everard Findlay, Brooklyn, NY
2008 *Thesis Exhibition*, Yale University, New Haven, CT
2007 *Second Year Show*, Yale University, New Haven, CT
2006 *First Year Show*, Yale University, New Haven, CT
2005 *The Miami Art Collaborative show*, Bas Fisher Invitational, Miami, FL
Placemaker at Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Miami, FL
2004 *Ten Times the Space Between Night and Day*, Guild and Greyshkul, New York, NY
Wallpaper for the 21st Century, Placemaker Gallery, Miami, FL
How Far Apart We Are, Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design, Denver, CO
In Advance of A Broken Heart, Wolfsonian Museum, Miami, FL
2003 *From Here On*, at Guild and Greyshkul, New York, NY
Placemaker Presents Guild and Greyshkul, Placemaker Gallery, Miami, FL
Six Scenes, The Cooper Union, New York, NY
Untitled(A Sentimental Education), Fredric Snitzer Gallery, Miami FL

Kiss Me Quick Before I Change My Mind, The House Gallery, Miami FL
2002 *Native*, The House Gallery, Miami FL
2001 *Special Projects*, Art in General, New York, NY

SELECTED PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

2016 Carrie Hojnicky, “This Artist Creates Fascinating Work That Literally Comes Off the Wall,” Architectural Digest, Jan 3
Cassidy Dawn Graves, Skin-Like Sculptures, ‘Apocalyptic Trophies,’ and Other Art Events, BEDFORD + BOWERY, Dec 5
Kate Messinger, “13 Must-See Artists at NADA New York,” VICE *The Creators Project*, May 6
“Surface Magazine Editor-in-Chief Spencer Bailey’s Favorite Works from NADA NY 2016,” *Artspace*, May 4
Ryan Steadman. “How I Get By: The Lives of Five American Artists,” *Observer*, April 13
“John Dante Bianchi: So This is Permanent,” *Slash/Paris*, February
2015 Katherine McMahon, “Habitat: John Dante Bianchi,” ARTNEWS, October 30
2014 “The Armchair Traveler: Winter is Coming,” *Interview Magazine*, November 7
Holland Cotter, “Review: To Do As One Would,” *The New York Times*, July
“Portfolio by John Dante Bianchi: Between Painting and Sculpture,” *Bomb Magazine*, July 21
Tara Plath, “Assorted Abstraction, in three parts,” *The Seen Journal*
2013 Paul D’Agostino. “John Dante Bianchi: Icy Topographies and Names,” *The L magazine*, October 9
Ashton Cooper. “7 Questions with form blending sculptor John Dante Bianchi,” *Blouin Artinfo*, October 1



