

David Schutter
Pergamena

24 May – 24 July 2016
Opening 24 May – 7PM

Magazzino is pleased to announce the opening of *Pergamena*, an exhibition of drawings by the American artist, David Schutter. This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery, an occasion that coincides with his first museum show in Italy at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Palazzo Poli.

Pergamena is the Latin word for parchment, a material made from processing animal skins and used in the ancient and medieval worlds as a writing surface. The preparation involves soaking, liming, scraping, and stretching the skins to achieve a uniformity of smooth texture, thinness, and great durability. Used in the manufacture of scrolls and later manuscript production, pergamena succeeded the use of papyrus, and until the popularization of paper and the printing press, was the primary writing surface for scribes. Though pergamena was widespread, the laborious and expensive techniques of its production reserved it for use in texts of legal, educational, or ritual import. In the 7th to 9th Centuries, a great number of manuscripts on pergamena were scrubbed for re-use, creating generations of palimpsests, texts that show the writing, partial erasure, and overlapping of disparate texts. The Greek origin of palimpsest means literally, to be "scratched again".

David Schutter's drawings in *Pergamena* are part of his daily drawing practice in which he uses the sheet of pergamena as a slate for thinking through drawing. The daily habit of drawing and erasing on the pergamena makes for a quasi-legible surface, each sheet inscribed with broken utterances of visual form and elegant renditions of historical technique. The pergamena sheet is an arena for a repeated and varied repertory performance of gestures. Regular phases in the lives of these drawings are their partial or total erasure, and their inevitable re- inscription by being "scratched again" with the lead of a pencil.

Schutter's drawings are not composed, but more arrived at and accumulated. In this way, they borrow their page organization from the classic study sheets of the Baroque era, a period that Schutter has been probing in the archive of the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Rome. Study sheets often situate vignettes or fragmented studies in axially different directions across the page. Varied subjects, such as figural fragments, drapery, and architectural relief appear on a typical single Baroque study sheet for the sake of economy and for the rehearsal of an image. Though there are not concretely recognizable forms in David Schutter's pergamena study sheets, the historical drawing forms of the Baroque do appear and recede in a scrambled presence. This phenomena is related to the time Schutter has spent looking at Baroque drawings in the Istituto over the course of the past year, when he studied the repeated forms of Baroque motif and technique, and the differences in signature styles across Baroque artists. While his drawing materials cross the ancient to modern worlds, there is nothing in David Schutter's drawings that situate them in reverence of the past. Rather these drawings, which destabilize and disfigure historical form, look uncannily toward an indeterminate future.

The artist's exhibition at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Palazzo Poli, entitled *Spolia*, opens May 31st, 2016.

David Schutter (USA b. 1974, lives and works in Chicago) has had solo exhibitions at the Gemäldegalerie Berlin; the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh; Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Palazzo Poli, Rome; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; with Aurel Scheibler, Berlin; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York; and Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago. His work has been featured in the Glasgow International Biennale; La Magazin- Centre National Art d' Contemporain, Grenoble; the David Roberts Art Foundation, London; and the Fondazione Memmo, Rome. David Schutter is the recipient of a 2015-16 Rome Prize awarded by the American Academy in Rome, where he is currently in residence.