



Courtesy Perrotin.

## JASON BOYD KINSELLA *MENTALVERSE*

Perrotin Dubai  
ICD Brookfield Place

November 25 — December 30  
Opening hours 10am — 6pm

**On the occasion of the debut of Perrotin in Dubai, the gallery is partnering with ICD Brookfield Place to organize the first exhibition of Jason Boyd Kinsella in the Emirates. The artist presents a new body of sculptures and paintings through an exclusive scenography.**

In portraiture, virtuosity has long been measured by verisimilitude. How one must wonder then does this quotient of likeness hold its esteem in a metaverse where the production and distribution of visual culture depends so much on likes, and where the broadest proliferation of portraits exists in an incessant stream of *selfies*- so many of them composed with the most posed calculations and referential iconographies of old masters and mediated through myriad filters to make us look better than our appearance? Jason Boyd Kinsella, an analog savant and maestro painter, steps into the digital paradigm with an intrepid affection for the mutability of self in the metamorphic fictions of appropriations and avatars, reconsiders this chasm between fact and fiction as a bridge rather than a breach. By foregoing the mandate of the easily recognizable

in lieu of a more evasive but no less determinate psychological recognition, Kinsella shifts the conversation from the specificity of people to the commonality of humanity. We are likely not familiar with his subjects in a personal way, but through his paintings and sculptures we come to know them as personalities.

Obviating the anatomical characteristics that serve caricaturists and facial recognition technology so well, and eschewing the consumer habits that come to define who we are with the precision of an algorithm, Jason Boyd Kinsella is at once reductive and expository. Details are incidental, even gratuitous, to Kinsella who builds his personae as a kind of elemental architecture, an edifice whose structure is both emphatically geometric and discretely conceived as a psychological framework. The ever-ornery James McNeill Whistler (himself a brilliant portraitist) acknowledged the talents of another portrait painter in his collected writings, *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, while dismissing him for working in so "mercantile" a medium. Though Jason's assembled visages are as seductive as any, he has little inclination for the flattery by which



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the visual impersonation of another posits an idealized sense of immortality. His is not an art of particulars but an investigation of archetypes. Whereas most artists mine the emotional or physiognomic idiosyncrasies of their subjects to limn some empathic connection with the viewer, Kinsella is most concerned with articulating the primary archetypes of personality that make each of us, for all our differences, far more universal than unique.

A lifelong artist who only committed to painting fulltime after an extended and successful tenure in advertizing, Kinsella's near-immediate phenomenal success- of a sort typically enjoyed by the proverbial hot young artists- is as much about his uncanny ability to hit the zeitgeist with a timelessly classicist mode of representation that addresses the slippery slope of identity, authenticity and actuality at a time when these very terms are simultaneously reified by and diverted within the spectacle of social media, as it is about de-cluttering our gaze away from this field of perpetual distraction onto, and into, contemplative forms. If you get the sense that he spent much of his childhood immersed in the masters, that is true as is how his wasted youth in the vibrant Punk and Skate Cultures now invests his art with a youthful questioning and unorthodox mode of navigation. He allows, like the best of us, a generous and fluid historical mash-up, but significantly, one that converges organic thinking and digital experience. Stylistically proximate to Cubism in its emphasis on primary geometric forms such as cubes, spheres and cones, Kinsella's abiding fascination with shapes in space (playful in a way akin to a child conjuring the world through building blocks) could not be more different that the concerns of Analytical and Synthetic Cubism which obliterated the rules of Renaissance Perspective in favor of a flattened space in which the multiple perspectives of our bifocal sight dynamically shift compositional absolutes. Rather we see an artist here who employs

the full representational toolbox of light, shadow, tonality and depth that precedes Modernism's assault on the picture plane, and is in fact now foundational to the coding through which computer assisted art is generated.

Deftly classical yet undeniably contemporary, it is as if incompatible worlds collide in the heads of Jason Boyd Kinsella. This oppositional synthesis, time-tripping like a tune so fresh and formidable that it sounds profoundly familiar from the first listening, is somehow even more lively in Kinsella's sculptures, exhibited here for the first time. Of all sculptural genres, few have seemed quite so arcane to contemporary expression than that of the bust, yet Kinsella, flipping back and forth through processes ranging from hand drawing, digital rendering, maquette building and computer animation, explodes the form with subversive whimsy and bravura balance that has all the figurative legibility of a Jacques Lipchitz and the shiny perfect guise of a digital simulation. Paired together, the paintings with the sculptures, we are able to better ascertain the aesthetic attractions undergirding Kinsella's rampant hybridity, in particular a deep seeded minimalist impulse, a kind of less is more rigor that imbues his art with a considered craft, patience and discipline, and an acute eye to the precepts of design that are sadly overlooked by many contemporary artists. Stripped down to the basics of necessity, Kinsella's reductive terms assert their presence without embellishment, activating his compressed yet open-ended compositions in such a way that we marvel at the immense sum of their modest parts, articulated in eye-candy primary colors where no single part takes precedence yet all dance together in radically choreographed complexity of interactions.

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Carlo McCormick

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#### PRESS CONTACTS

**Coralie David** Associate Director of Press and Communications  
coralie@perrotin.com +33 1 86 95 63 51

**Louise Labadie** Press officer  
louiselabadie@perrotin.com +33 1 84 17 74 62