

Art Basel Season at The Bonnier Gallery

Minyades: Richard Höglund's Breakthrough Paintings Excavate the Darkness “Looking for Order: Painting After Covid”

Drenched in *Dragon's Blood*. Dusted with pulverized bone and marble. Scored in silverpoint. Richard Höglund's new series of paintings for the exhibition *Minyades* are dark excavations that come through to the other side of the pandemic. Debuting at [The Bonnier Gallery](#) during Miami Art Week, the show is entitled *Minyades*, opens Dec. 2 through Feb. 28 and is curated by Grant Bonnier. This story-rich show took a year for Bonnier and Höglund to painstakingly conceptualize together. The result is raising the bar for the eagerly anticipated return of Art Basel to Miami. The public is invited to meet the artist at the opening reception at The Bonnier Gallery, on Thursday evening, December 2 at 7:00 p.m.

“Richard Höglund's new paintings have a lot to tell you right now,” says Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts, the renowned art writer, gallerist, and curator. “Here is the radical zone of Höglund's midcareer finally appearing, here is the type of paintings you can sink your teeth into. Reminding us that painting can still take us to uncharted, uncomfortable territories,” she writes, in her catalogue essay titled *Looking for Order: Painting After Covid*.



Detail images of *Bacchanale I*, by Richard Höglund (2021). Oil on linen.

Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts has been invited by the Gallery to write for the first in a series of new art books that Grant Bonnier will be publishing. **Since 1837, the acclaimed Bonnier family of Europe has been renowned publishers of fine arts books.** The literary dynasty is famous for publishing the first works by August Strindberg. Bonnier's vision for his maverick Gallery now comes full circle with this new announcement: **The Bonnier Gallery is spearheading a press of a distinct caliber** that celebrates this 200-year literary legacy. Also setting this Gallery apart is the art world lineage of Grant's father, the famed Manhattan gallerist Peder Bonnier. He is synonymous with the great minimalist era, a time when Peder flourished in New York alongside the likes of Donald Judd, Sol Lewitt, Frank Stella, Claes Oldenburg, and Cy Twombly (adventures with Warhol and Christo were also thrown in for good measure). Grant Bonnier's DNA brims with these two family traits: a deep love for language as art form, alongside an instinctive savviness for nurturing his Gallery's roster of artists, seeking out great works from the next generation.

We Are All of Us Sitting in These Dark Canvases: Trying to Make Sense of a World We Don't Recognize

The American artist Richard Höglund (originally from New York), created this series in France while the world was on lockdown. He painted during dark nights of the soul in a converted tractor garage in the French countryside, where he cloistered his young family away from urban density during the pandemic.

The exhibition takes its flight from the Greek mythology surrounding *The Daughters of King Minyas*, who refused to participate in the sacrificial Bacchanalian rituals of the cult of Dionysus. In the myth's ending, their isolation did not save them from the outside world. They were ultimately turned into bats, shrieking into the night. **“This new exhibition is a synthesis of poetry, painting, and sculpture — demonstrating how different artistic mediums interact and engage with each other throughout time,”** says Grant Bonnier.

In her essay, Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts reflects: “We are all of us sitting in these dark canvases trying to make sense again of a world we don't recognize because it has changed, we have changed. It sounds like a cliché now to even imagine this as we try to ramp back up into the gear we were in before the pandemic.”

The narrative of this exhibition begins with Carl Andre's rarely seen 1990 sculpture entitled *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

Named after Ovid's tragic tale, in the United States this sculpture has only been previously exhibited to the public once in New York, and once in Los Angeles. This is the first time this sculpture has been shown in the southeast.

This is the first tale the Daughters of Minyas recounted to each other at home, refusing to worship the cult of Dionysus and the turmoil of the outside world that surrounded them (a mirror of 2020's long ordeal).

The exhibition catalogue features a handwritten transcription by Höglund of Ovid's text of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

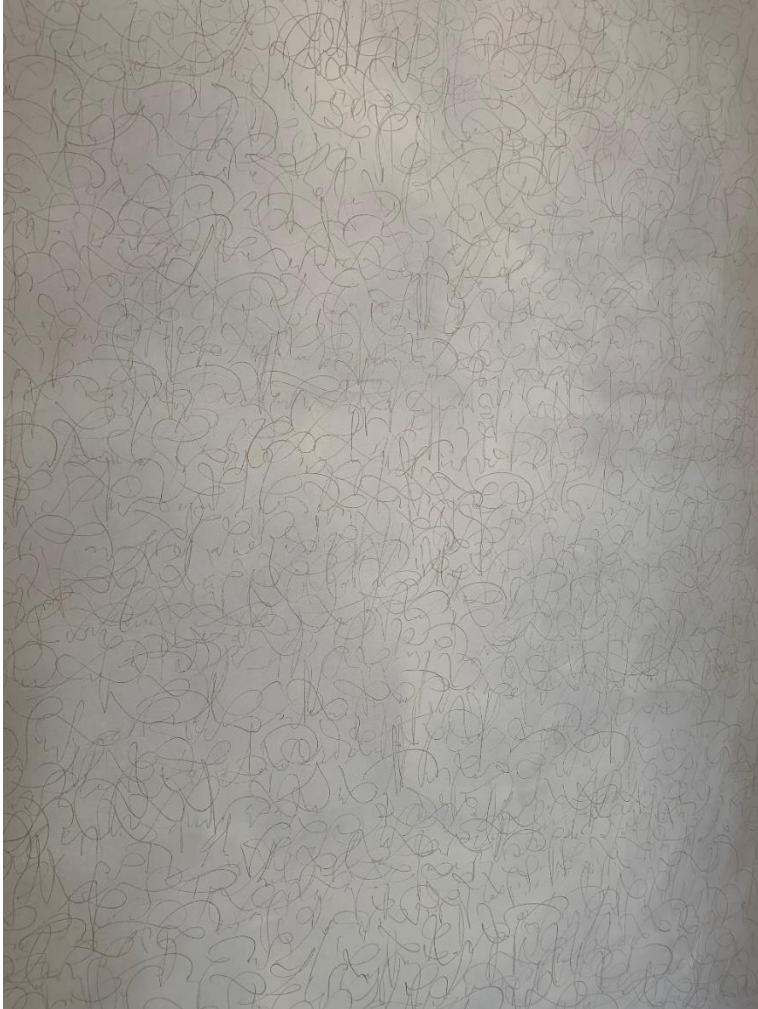


Pyramus and Thisbe (1990). Western red cedar. ©2021 Carl Andre/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

Initially, Bonnier sent Höglund a photo of Carl Andre's *Pyramus and Thisbe* sculpture to help spark the painter's inspiration. The photo worked: “Carl Andre's *Pyramus and Thisbe* catalyzed my desire to deep-dive into the greater story of the Minyades themselves,” said Richard Höglund.

The sculpture by Carl Andre is derived from the Roman poet's telling of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the doomed lovers from rival families who were divided by a wall. Not allowed to meet, they whispered to each other through a hole in the wall that separated them, planning to meet outside (where they met their untimely deaths). “Carl Andre has always had a singular ability to synthesize poetry into sculpture and the work itself is a particular work of mine.”

Audiences detect this. They feel it, they know when work is authentic.



Minyades II (detail), by Richard Höglund (2021). Oil on linen.

“While Höglund is recognized as a steward of the historic work by great artists, he is certainly not derivative. All of Richard Höglund’s work is distinctly him, completely his own. Audiences detect this. They feel it, they know when work is authentic,” says Grant Bonnier.

Höglund’s works are steeped in art history. Like so many of the great expat American masters who roamed the continents during the 20th century in search of connection and artistic inspiration, Höglund has immersed himself abroad, living and working in Portugal, France, Switzerland, Iceland, Germany, and Belgium. It has been said that his paintings are explorations of history and language. When he visits a country, Höglund dives into its culture, and learns the language.

The densely layered surfaces of these new works radiate an aura of primordial otherworldliness, meticulously underscored in silverpoint. These may actually be some of the largest silverpoint drawings ever made.

“The difficulties of taking the traditionally intimate medium of silverpoint, and using it to make such large paintings, led me to explore many other different materials in the pursuit of ideal surfaces,” says Höglund.

The artist created his own paints and grounds for these new works, using centuries-old recipes he discovered from a 15th century book by Cennini about this ancient alchemy of colors, including: concoctions of cinnabar which the ancient Romans used to tint their sails, *Dragon’s Blood* (a pigment that “could never bring you honor”), dark indigo, and Lapis Lazuli, among other pigments which he infused into these new paintings.

Throughout the long months of the pandemic, as the curator and the artist conjured up this exhibition via phone and on Zoom calls, they were struck by how these classic myths ring true during our present cycle of time. “This exhibition shows us why the classics remain important. **There are reasons why we keep returning, century after century, to these classics to help us better understand our world,**” says Bonnier. In the story that underlies this exhibition, the charismatic cult figure Dionysus was so deeply offended by the refusal of the princesses to worship him that he punished them by making them go mad.

“The classics can inform us, even in our time,” says Höglund. “These stories cycle in and out of popularity but transcend contemporaneity because they were hewn from truths. These are ancient discussions. They are still on the table. Most importantly, these stories do not live on in pictures, they live on in people’s minds. **These pictures are large and silent until you come.**”

This work did not come out of a vacuum

When Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts visited the artist in his studio in France to preview this new series of paintings, she wrote about witnessing “. . . the grace of watching someone happy-go-lucky become a man, a father, a husband in the time of a pandemic.”

“He had managed to get them out of harm’s way, deftly into the countryside, and having done that, what came through him was this darkness, these dark explorations. All of us, for the last year and a half – including many artists – have found that this darkness has come through. This work did not come out of a vacuum.”



Minyades I, by Richard Höglund (2021). Oil on linen.

The Light Shines Through the Cracks in the Darkness

“We can’t escape our condition, can we? A good painting, however, is a vessel for private, future thought,” says Richard Höglund. “There is good in the universal and eternal qualities of art. Art is by definition not nature, but it is the epitome of *human* nature. Poetry has a great rapport with what I want painting to do. But painting is not like language. **That’s the great advantage of painting – by distilling you get something potent. This elixir brings you closer to God,**” says Richard Höglund.

Jill Silverman van Coenegrachts’ essay states: “The spell breaks, the sacrifice is made, the blood is spent and night comes back. Have we had to live through months of confinement where we could assiduously re-enact such things in mind, frozen and cut off in our own private worlds, far from each other, losing our minds?”

“My overarching goal with the Gallery is to connect with younger audiences who might not feel that art is part of their life yet,” says Grant Bonnier. “To help them peel back the curtain. To provide them that kind of moment in their life, to show them that yes – this is a world that is for you.”

“Art Basel can be a difficult time for Miami galleries, especially because it can seem daunting to put on an exhibition that competes with the noise of Basel – but this is one of those shows,” says Grant Bonnier. “We are demonstrating to the rest of the world that Miami galleries are serious.”

The Bonnier Gallery Presents a New Art Book Press



The copper plates are being created in Paris at *Les Ateliers Moret*

In addition to the exhibition catalogue, the Gallery will also publish a limited edition of 17 boxed sets for this exhibition.

They were printed exclusively in Paris by [Les Ateliers Moret](#), one of the longest functioning etching studios in Paris. Each will feature five copper plate etchings by Höglund, representing the five new paintings in this gallery show.

Each boxed edition will be unbound, allowing buyers to frame and hang these rare prints.

About Richard Höglund

Born in 1982, Richard Höglund studied art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and semiology at MIT in Boston, USA. He holds a MFA (DNSEP, 2008) obtained at the Haute école des arts du Rhin, in Strasbourg, France. In 2013, Höglund was selected by Tacita Dean to participate in her workshop at the Fundación Botín in Santander. His paintings are considerations of History and Language. The Dallas Museum of Art recently acquired Höglund's monumental painting, *XIII STATION: MNEMOSYNON (History Painting VI: Via Crucis)*, for its permanent collection.

Solo exhibitions and projects include: 2021 Minyades, The Bonnier Gallery, Miami (US); 2021 Vine Pictures, Ronchini Gallery, London (UK); 2020 Vénus piquée par un buisson de roses, Vine Pictures, Galerie Flore, Brussels (BE); The Bonnier Gallery, Miami USA (2019); Custot Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2016); Ronchini Gallery, London (2016); Skafffell, Seyðisfjörður, Iceland (2015); Tête, Berlin, Germany (2012); Dimensions Variable, Miami, USA (2012); Mamco, Geneva, Switzerland (2010); Nina Johnson, Miami, USA (2009); Le Salon du Dessin Contemporain, Paris, France (2008); La Chaufferie, Strasbourg, France (2006).

Group exhibitions include: Rachofsky Collection, Dallas, US (2021); The Bonnier Gallery, Miami, US (2018); Custot Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2017); Villa Iris, Santander, Spain (2013); Bob Rauschenburg Gallery, Fort Myers, USA (2013); New World School of the Arts, Miami, US (2011); Bakehouse Art Complex, Miami, USA (2010); Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre Dame, Strasbourg, France (2007); National Art Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria (2007); La Bellevilloise, Paris (2006).

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[The Bonnier Gallery](#) is located at 3408 N.W. 7th Avenue in Allapattah, Miami's burgeoning new arts district.

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m.– 6:00 p.m.

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