

BLACKSTON
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JOE SOLA

***The Senior Discount* - Sunday, October 30th - Sunday, December 18th, 2011**

Blackston is pleased to present *The Senior Discount*, Los Angeles-based conceptual artist Joe Sola's solo exhibition of new video work, paintings and drawings. A reception for the artist will be held on Sunday, October 30th from 4 to 8 p.m.: from 4 to 5 p.m. the gallery will host a conversation between Sola and Russell Ferguson, Chair of the Department of Art, UCLA. The talk is open to the public.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the gallery has produced a 98-page catalogue of the artist's work with an essay by Toby Kamps, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at The Menil Collection.

Sola's latest video work, paintings and drawings further his exploration of the role of the artist in the documentation of, participation in and critical reflection on cultural dynamics and polemics. Paintings of a Vietnam War scene on a big toe, Colonel Sanders with an enlarged body part and President Obama's hand presenting a business card, among a broader examination of power, form a body of work that captures the horrendous, the ironic and the profound – all from Sola's absurdist point of view.

Sola's larger oil paintings in the show include renderings of an American art storage facility, an abstracted boardwalk with a cash machine spewing cash and a limp-wristed hand holding a cigarette with the text "Are you from Hollywood" above it. Sola combines abstract and realist styles along with text to explore personal and cultural psychological minefields with acuity and humor.

Nothing is off limits in Sola's practice. In Sola's exhibition video, *some blood of an artist* (2011), a lone male figure engages in grotesque and violent acts on corpses, all played by Sola, transforming body parts into paintings and sculptures, that illuminate the artist's position towards abstract art, American popular cinema, and a Red Bull-driven political economy. The video, inspired by two books, *American Psycho* by Brett Easton Ellis and *Guide* by Dennis Cooper, is Sola's most articulate foray into the relationship between creativity and violence.

Joe Sola received his BA from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and his MFA from Otis College of Art and Design. His work has been exhibited extensively in the US and abroad. He has had solo shows with Blackston, Happy Lion Gallery in Los Angeles, the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, among others. Recent group exhibitions have included *Me Gusta El Plastico* at the Museo de los Pintores Oaxaqueños, Oaxaca City, Mexico, *The Studio Sessions* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, *Mixed Signals* at the Cranbrook Art Museum, and *Hard Targets: Masculinity and American Sport* at Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In 2009 he was commissioned to make a public sculpture for the Vancouver Biennale. Sola has been invited to perform at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, MOT International, London. His videos have been screened internationally, among other venues, at the The J. Paul Getty Museum and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico City, Mexico, and The Havana Biennial, Havana, Cuba.