

Back Catalogue - Ross Hansen

Stand 3C - 28, Hall 3, Brussels Expo
18 – 21 April

As part of the 31st edition of Art Brussels, Stephane Simoens is proud to present a solo show of hyper-realist drawing works by British artist Ross Hansen. Made specifically for the fair, this entirely new body of work has been made in response to the maxim that at some point in their career every artist inevitably finds themselves starting to 're-make their own back catalogue'.

Eschewing what he sees as the self-parodying production of 'signature' artworks typical of mid-career artists, Hansen, who turns 40 during the month of the fair, has chosen to make a rather more abrupt about-turn, mid-production process. Rejecting the temptation to emulate previous, commercially successful outcomes, Hansen's retrospection comprises a rather more critical re-examination of his own working methods.

The drawings presented here catalogue the different stages of his creative practice as revealed by the paper-trail that is left behind, from the initial notation of ideas to the ultimate documentation of completed works. The title piece for the series actually purports to show an image of the catalogue produced to document this very exhibition, the cover of which bears a reproduction of that drawing. The layers of representation are frequently multiplied and timelines confused in these works; resolved outcomes become the models for future drawings, proto-types and works in progress are re-presented as finished products, the process becomes the outcome.



Shortlisting 2013 colour pencil on paper (detail)

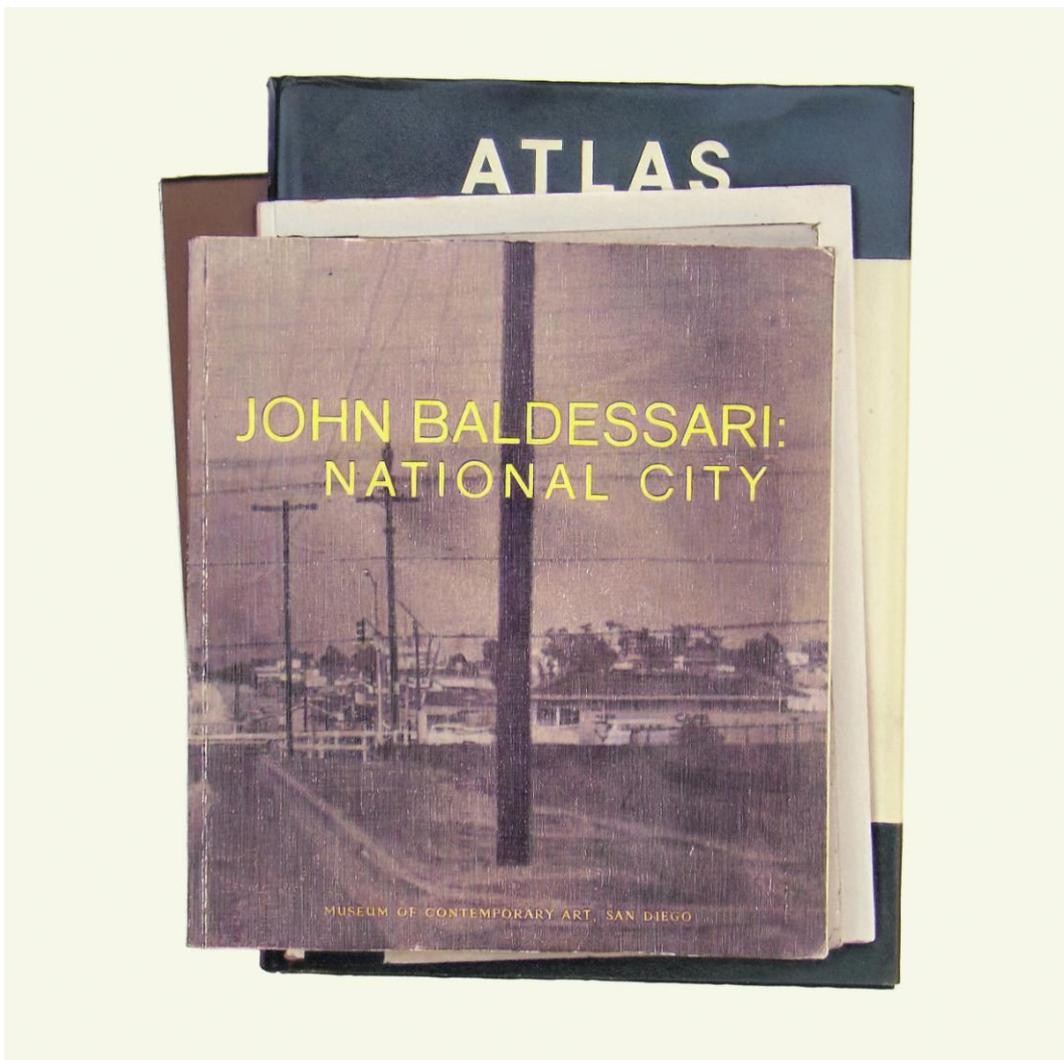
The choice of media is also significant here. Not only is drawing widely perceived to be the language of idea development, but for Hansen the use of colour pencils in particular holds a resonance that echoes right back to his childhood. The impulse to produce 'life-like' images that was first exhibited by the artist when drawing from picture books as a child, is the same recording culture that is evident here, magnified a hundredfold.

The stacks of notes, printed photographs, books, references and models for past, present and future works are all meticulously documented as they were naturally arranged in the artist's studio. The verisimilitude embodied by the drawn areas is often in stark contrast however to the wilfully contrived positioning of these sections within the overall picture frame. The sharply delineated edges effectively separate such 'figures' from their paper grounds. Consequently they appear to float in a kind of non-space, in seemingly flagrant opposition to the books on composition and picture framing depicted in many of the works.

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In this we can recognise the artists' attempts to identify something like a fundamental value in the image making process, to challenge and question the established conventions of pictorial construction and representation. In this discourse, process is lauded over outcome, culture over learnt conventions, and above all integrity over artfulness. This is a series of works that reveals not only the mechanics of one artists' working practice but that also raises questions about the nature of artistic production itself and the value system that we attach to it.



Frame of Reference 2013 colour pencil on paper (detail)

Ross Hansen (1973, UK) completed a Master's degree at the Slade School of Fine Art, London in the late 1990s, since when he has gone on to develop an international exhibiting record. *Back Catalogue* is Hansen's eighth solo exhibition in total and his second in Belgium with Stephane Simoens Contemporary Fine Art. His work features in such collections as UBS Warburg (London), Beth DeWoody (New York), and private collections across Europe.