

For Immediate Release

Ectoplasm from the Underworld

New paintings by Christian Rieben

Opening Reception	September 5, 6-9pm
Show Run	September 5 – October 2, 2015
Bagels and Bloody Mary Brunch in celebration of SAIC Alumni Weekend	September 20, 10am-1pm

The Bike Room is pleased to present new works by Christian Rieben. The visceral nature of these paintings' surfaces and content makes for powerful objects. Their presence demands that the audience engage with ideas concerning memory, mythology and a reconsideration of the art historical canon.

The titles, as well as the narratives within, tug at the memory: Greek mythology, Botticelli and sainthood. Yet the artist does not simply reproduce something familiar. Instead, his work asks that the viewer recollect something long forgotten and then reconstruct that memory or idea. The notion of a joyous Europa in *European Transportation*, a frightened figure in *Primavera*, and finally, a trapped but calm body in *Catch and Release* confound the viewer. The works seem to reflect resistance and joy, creating a sense of pleasurable chaos. These paintings dislocate expectations concerning myth and masterworks.



European Transportation

The disrupted narratives in Rieben's paintings question art historical foundations by asking the viewer to reflect on the sources of these elusive themes. It is evident that *European Transportation* is inspired by any Rape of Europa; *Primavera* illustrates the notion of spring and fertility within constructs of power and domination – not celebration. *Catch and Release* alludes to the resolution of conflict, especially that seen in art historical images of saints. The first work hints at the throwing off of sexual restraints: Europa is not a frightened victim, but a figure relishing the ride. The other two paintings reveal violence through their use of brushstrokes, choice of color and subject matter. *Catch and Release's* violence is tempered by the central figure's beatific expression, while *Primavera* creates tension between the aggression of the image and the brightness of the colors. These selections disrupt harmony and correctness, compelling one to question who created the canon and for whom. The paintings engage the viewer and demand that (s)he reconsider the author and audience of past works of art, thus dismantling the foundations on which the canon rests.

Sarita K. Heer

**Please join us again, along with SAIC alumni, for a bagel and bloody Mary brunch and viewing!
Sunday, September 20, 10am – 1pm**

The Bike Room is an artist-run project space in East Rogers Park.
For information or appointments, please contact: Nancy Lu Rosenheim
nancy@nancylurosenheim.com (773) 329-7879
<http://nancylurosenheim.com/the-bike-room/Ectoplasm-from-the-Underworld/>