For immediate release

MARCEL DZAMA

Puppets, Pawns, and Prophets

6 April - 11 May 2013

Private view: Friday 5 April, 6 to 8 PM



Shall We Venture Outside, 2013. Ink, gouache, and graphite on paper 17×14 inches (43.2 $\times 35.6$ cm)

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of recent and new work by Marcel Dzama, on view at the gallery's 24 Grafton Street space in London. *Puppets, Pawns, and Prophets* features three videos inspired by the game of chess, as well as puppets and masks based on the characters, drawings, collages, dioramas, and sculptural works.

Dzama has become known for his prolific drawings, which are characterized by their distinctive palette of muted browns, grays, greens, and reds. In recent years, the artist has expanded his practice to encompass three-dimensional work and film and has developed an immediately recognizable language that draws from a diverse range of references and artistic influences.

Death Disco Dance is a four-minute video loop featuring characters based on chess pieces. It was filmed in Guadalajara, Mexico, in conjunction with Dzama's A Game of Chess (which debuted at David Zwirner, New York, in 2011). In lieu of the latter's

narrative of fatal interchanges and power reversals, Dzama shows the ballet-dancing actors in a synchronized, but almost entirely improvised, dance, that was planned and choreographed on the spot. The artist himself created the disco-like soundtrack using a small drum machine. The loop will be displayed on several monitors in the gallery's street-facing window.

Sister Squares, which premieres in the exhibition, takes its title after artist and chess player Marcel Duchamp's handbook Opposition and Sister Squares Are Reconciled, published in 1932 with chess champion Vitaly Halberstadt in reference to theoretical strategies involving pawn and king endgames. Evocative of the quadrangles on a chessboard, Dzama has divided footage from A Game of Chess across four "screens," which simultaneously reveal the narrative. In the third video on view, The Infidels, the symbolic parallels between chess and war are made apparent as uniformed characters confront each other in a violent, imaginative battle.

Mask sculptures depicting some of the main protagonists in the films were created from ceramic and tin and bear the influence of local crafts in Mexico, where recycled cans are often used to make toys. The reconstituted source materials can be partially deciphered in the works, where colorful logos and various texts combine to create the shiny surfaces of the masks.

Amongst the drawings included in the show is the large-scale, four-part *Myth*, *Manifestos*, *and Monsters*, in which characters from the films line up alongside figures from the artist's earlier repertoire. As if posing for a group portrait, their various stages of disguise heighten the sense of a hidden plot. Other drawings, like two large-scale works executed on piano scroll, depict the characters in poses which mirror their movements and dancing in the films, while a series of new collages feature this imagery in unexpected contexts. Five small paintings depicting a lone female terrorist seated on a bed emphasize the underlying tension between reality and fiction which characterizes the works throughout the show.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by David Zwirner and Hatje Cantz, with an essay by Deborah Solomon. In Fall 2013, a comprehensive monograph of Dzama's work, produced and designed in collaboration with the artist, will be published by Abrams and will feature contributions by Bradley Bailey, Dave Eggers, Spike Jonze, and Raymond Pettibon.

Marcel Dzama was born in 1974 in Winnipeg, Canada. Since 1998, his work has been represented by David Zwirner, where he has had six solo exhibitions with the gallery in New York. *Puppets, Pawns, and Prophets* marks his first solo show at David Zwirner, London.

Dzama has exhibited widely in the United States and internationally. In 2010, a major survey of the artist's work was presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Other recent solo exhibitions include those organized by the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain; Museo de Arte de Zapopan (MAZ), Zapopan, Mexico; World Chess Hall of Fame and Museum, St. Louis, Missouri (all 2012); Gemeentemuseum, The Hague; Kunstverein Braunschweig, Germany (both 2011); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2008); Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England (2006); and Le Magasin - Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble, France (2005).

Work by the artist is held in museum collections worldwide, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Dallas Museum of Art; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Tate Gallery, London; and the Vancouver Art Gallery. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

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