

CHRISTOPHER ASTLEY*Mayhap*

May 24 – June 30

541 West 23rd Street

Life happens too fast for you ever to think about it. If you could just persuade people of this, but they insist on amassing information. —Kurt Vonnegut

Leo Koenig Inc. is pleased to announce an exhibition of new sculptures, collages and paintings by Christopher Astley. Highlighted by large-component sculptures made up of concrete-filled fabric bags, Christopher Astley's work provides a metaphorical antidote to the lightning-fast environment in which most of us find ourselves. Grounded in the notion of thought as a diverse series of closed systems and pattern recognitions, and stressing the importance of novelty, Astley's constructions take the form of walls, but are neither barriers nor boundaries. Greatly influenced by emergence theory, whereby complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions, Astley's arrangements are dependent upon a few simple relational assemblages and go on from there. Though the objects are of formidable weight and volume, individually, they seem almost buoyant and animated by the fabrics that contain them. Seemingly unmoving, the shapes in their nearly figurative arrangements reveal a slowly shifting lexicon, strangely both whimsical and adamant.

Astley's directives when making his sculptures are only loosely built around manipulating form. Often sewing the bags that hold the concrete, Astley fills each one with the mixture and allows the curing process to partially assist in the creation of the individual shapes. Irresistibly tactile, sometimes the results are within the realm of expectation. Other times, the results are completely unanticipated, bending unevenly to the rules of gravity, chemical reaction, and time. It is the surprising event that Astley is striving for. Though patterns are established by arranging the individual bags, nothing is ever pre-arranged in the artists mind. Like water seeking its own level, Astley's constructions often seem to seek their native resting place, as if the forms themselves are territorially prescient.

The sculptures central to the artist's work also inform the collages and paintings included in this exhibition. The collages offer the artist the ability to construct patterns and combinations that would be impossible to achieve in his three-dimensional works. The framing of the shapes are flattened throughout the picture plane, abstracting the heft of the forms and underscoring the novelty of the emerging patterns. The paintings employ a technique where the negative space encroaches up to the edge of the arrangements. The resulting images become organic forms, mimicking single cell amoebas or floating plankton, taking the viewer instantly from a macro to micro perspective. We are forced to contemplate not only the spatial constraints, but also the synesthetic perception of the passage of time.

Christopher Astley has exhibited extensively, most recently in exhibitions such The Margulies Collection, 2010–2011, and "Groan Hall" at the APF Lab, Art Production Fund, New York City. His work has also been included in exhibitions at the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL; Fisher Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA; H&R Block Artspace at Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO; and the Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL. Christopher Astley lives and works in New York City.

For more information, please contact Stephanie Schumann at stephanie@leokoenig.com or [212.334.9255](tel:212.334.9255). Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 6pm.