

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

The World's Leading Art Magazine

Flash Art

January - February 2007

NEW YORK TALES

Andrea Bellini



NORBERT SCHWONTKOWSKI, right: *Schmetterling*, 2006. Oil on canvas, 60 x 40 cm; left: *My Face*, 2006. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm. Courtesy Mitchell-Innes & Nash.

DEAR PAINTER...

Uptown, Mitchell-Innes & Nash presents the New York solo show of another German artist, Norbert Schwontkowski. Born in 1949 and active since the end of the 1970s, this painter began only recently to impose himself on the attention of the international public, first with a personal exhibition at Miami's Rubell Collection in 2005 and then with his participation in the latest edition of the Berlin Biennial. His small canvases of muted colors, mixed with metal oxides and ground pigments, have passed unadulterated through the neo-expressionist drunkenness of the '80s, and across the procedural fads of the '90s. Populated with small objects and slight human figures, his paintings create a distant world, immersed in a dimension that is still and timeless. Exhibited along with his paintings, Schwontkowski also shows a series of pieces by certain artists that he considers close to his work: Forrest Bess, Philip Guston, Alex Katz and Pablo Picasso. To be honest, none of these artists, with the possible exception of Guston, seems to share the dark side of Schwontkowski's pictorial imagination. His fine and dark color range, the immobile objects, the eccentric and surreal personalities, make one think more of Morandi, to which he marries, by a strange joke of destiny, the black and grotesque humor of Hieronymus Bosh.

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