



# ECHOES

## Simon Berger solo exhibition

December 3, 2023 – January 27, 2024

*Preview | Sunday, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 11am-4pm*

*Opening Reception with the Artist | Thursday, Dec 7<sup>th</sup> @ 6-10pm*

**Fabien Castanier Gallery** is proud to present, “ECHOES”, a solo exhibition for contemporary Swiss artist, Simon Berger. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Laurent Marthaler Contemporary and consists of a curated selection of Berger’s signature portrait works. The artist brings to life visions of striking faces, emerging from panes of glass that he has meticulously broken and manipulated. By crafting such realism within the constraints of a traditionally fragile medium, the artist presents us with a truly unique form of expression.

Simon Berger (b. 1976, Switzerland) began his artistic endeavors by experimenting with different materials. Working with spray paint, wood, and other discarded items, he found an interest in used vehicle bodies to create assemblages. After working with one car’s windshield, he discovered a fascination with glass. Formally trained as a carpenter, Berger applied his knowledge of raw materials to create pieces that belie their delicate medium. He uses a hammer directly onto the surface of safety glass and the shattered material turns white in various degrees from this process. Emerging from the once transparent plane are arresting faces in high contrast. As they appear from the shadows, their expressions are intense or contemplative – illusions of ephemeral beauty that suggest an on-going struggle between the everlasting desire for ideal form and the deconstructive nature of time.

In order to materialize the hyper-realistic portraits of his mysterious subjects, Berger explores a uniquely contemporary version of subtractive sculpture. Though technically two dimensional, the cracks in the glass act as pigment in a structural way. The broken clarity solidifies to appear white when set upon a black background, as he often does with his gallery pieces. Like classical sculpture in which form is created by the detailed removal of material, such as from marble or wood, Berger’s technique sees the “removal” of the glass’s perfection to reveal shape. The artist employs destruction as the basis of his creation, highlighting both the strength and fragility of his medium and subject matter.




Like most subtractive sculpture, the nature of the artist’s technique relies upon definitive movements that once made cannot be undone. Removal of material, or in this case the breaking of glass, is permanent and unchanging. While the initial preparation of the composition can begin with large and forceful hits to the surface, as the piece evolves each hammer strike needs to become more intentional and calculated. However, unlike traditional fine art, each stroke of light is determined by chance with each fall of the artist’s tool rendering a chaotic pattern of cracks – controlled to a point but ultimately random. Thus, there is a performative narrative behind his work, as the craftsmanship speaks through his pieces. Every detail of the glass, which when inspected up close, reveals the uncontrollable nature of his vitreous canvas. Only when seen from afar, and with the entire piece in view, do the facial features become clear and the individuals emerge.

Since making his first works in glass in 2017, Berger has stepped out as a cutting edge and notable figure on the contemporary art scene. He has shown in institutions and events worldwide with solo and group exhibitions, including showings at two of the world’s most prominent glass art museums, Vitromusée in Romont, Switzerland, and Murano Glass Museum in Venice, Italy. Recently, the artist partnered with the National Women’s History Museum to create a portrait of Vice President Kamala Harris in 2021. Later that year, Berger created works for the “We are Unbreakable” project, which honored the victims of the Beirut explosion in 2020. He continues to create new work for projects and exhibitions around the globe from his studio in Niederönz, Switzerland.

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A catalog of work is available. Please contact the gallery for any press inquiries.

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