



WBg

William Busta Gallery
Cleveland Ohio

Aaron Koehn
It all depends



Cover:
*sad rainy day water
on window #1, 2013*
direct-to-substrate print on
glass double-pane window,
wood, 72.5 x 29.5 x 25.5 in.



Opposite page:
Smoke and Mirrors #1, 2013
UV-cured ink on sheer fabric,
25.5 x 23 x .75 in.

Above:
*Abstract Undergarment #3
(dyptych), 2013*
oil on bleached linen,
20 x 35 x .5 in.

Aaron Koehn
It all depends

Sep 6–Oct 12, 2013

William Busta Gallery
2731 Prospect Avenue
Cleveland OH 44115

W williambustagallery.com
T 216.298.9071
E bustagallery@gmail.com

Aaron Koehn: It all depends



Stop. Reboot. Rethink everything. Start again.

In his memorable 2011 solo exhibition at the William Busta Gallery, Aaron Koehn presented a striking group of lavishly sensual representative paintings of stark industrial settings. Following a period during which he intensely reevaluated his artistic practice, he decided to move away from pictorial painting entirely. This monumental shift led to a new, exceptionally diverse group of austere—and, at times, seemingly authorless—sculptural objects, patently stripped of stylistic flourishes.

Koehn's new work is, first and foremost, idea-driven. His willful abandonment of the conventions of painting began with a feeling of being overly constricted. "I was operating under a lot of known conventions," he said during a recent studio visit. "My entire definition of art was painting. I wanted it to be more than that. I realized that I had been taming a lot of ideas because they weren't operating under the conditions I knew. I began questioning painting as my final output, and ultimately, I stopped thinking that painting could accommodate my ideas."

Experiences in Koehn's everyday life also fed into his dramatic decision to stop thinking of painting as his primary mode of production. An almost-year-long studio renovation project put him in the mindset of constructing forms in actual space using a wide array of raw materials. He was quick to realize the poetic, symbolic, and associative qualities of these building materials. He began using them along with an assortment of found objects to construct concise narratives. Rather than thinking in terms of pictures, he started to conceive pieces in which no portion relied passively

on the conventions of art making—no rectangular wood stretcher, no canvas, no picture-hanging wire. In Koehn's new work, every single element would have a purpose; each and every component would relate to the work's content.

As with his paintings, most of which are based on images of buildings or environments surrounding his studio in Cleveland's industrial Midtown neighborhood, Koehn's sculptural work frequently references his daily life or his personal history. Even the issue of his struggle to free himself from the constraints of painting is perceivable in new work. In some pieces, the alteration of an objects' surface, for instance, becomes a kind of activity that can be seen as analogous to painting—for example, the act of chroming a laptop computer or a dumbbell. Likewise, Koehn drew inevitable parallels between rectangular elements in his sculptures and the stretched canvases onto which he once projected the bulk of his ideas.

More often, Koehn now allows himself to go wherever his ideas take him, whether those ideas relate to painting or not. While it is perhaps too early to know how his newfound freedom will reveal new boundaries in his work, for now it is serving to allow him to confront essential questions about the act of art making. The very nature of an object, as opposed to an image of that object, lies at the core of his current investigation. And within that arena of inquiry, Koehn is continually searching for ways to both discover and reveal bits of meaning as they emerge from his endlessly thoughtful engagement with the stuff that surrounds us all.

—Dan Tranberg

Aaron Koehn

Born 1983, Cleveland, Ohio
Resides in Cleveland, Ohio

aaronkoehn.com
aaronkoehn.tumblr.com

Education

- 2014 Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA
MFA Painting
- 2006–08 Lyme Academy College of Fine Art, Old Lyme, CT
Post Baccalaureate Certificate Painting
- 2003–06 Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN
Bachelors of Arts degree Studio Art

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 *On One Page*, Bond Gallery. Richmond, VA
It all depends, William Busta Gallery. Cleveland, OH
- 2011 *Self Storage*, William Busta Gallery. Cleveland, OH

Group Exhibitions

- 2013 *I'm feeling so optimistic I can hardly stand it*,
1207 N. Boulevard, Richmond, VA
Land, Ho! (curated by Holly Coulis and Ridley Howard),
FAB Gallery, Richmond, VA
- 2012 *Prop Comedy*, FAB Gallery, Richmond, VA
Bazaarbeque, Forum Gallery, Cleveland, OH
In My Room, Cleveland Clinic, Cleveland, OH
Ill Perceived, Art Cares, MOCA Cleveland, OH
Annual Group Invitational, William Rupnik Gallery,
Cleveland, OH
- 2011 *Spacelift* (curated by Kristin Rogers), Walleye Gallery,
Cleveland, OH
- 2010 *Skulls & Revolution*, Walleye Gallery, Cleveland, OH
Cleveland Emerging Artists Union Club. Cleveland, OH
Threshold (two-person exhibition), Proximity Gallery,
Cleveland, OH
Home Show, Ohio City, Cleveland, OH

Awards

- 2011 Nesnadny+Schwartz Visiting Curator Program,
Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH



Publications

- New American Paintings*, Juried Exhibitions
in Print, #105, 2013
- New American Paintings*, Juried Exhibitions
in Print, #101, 2012
- Rooms Without a View*, Exhibition Catalogue.
Douglas Max Utter, 2011



top:
It all depends (detail), 2013
gallery installation

above:
*sad rainy day water on
window #3*, 2013
direct-to-substrate print
on glass, blinds, wood,
68 x 25.75 x 3 in.