

# BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



Miquel Barceló, *Quatre Coins Jaunes*, 2013, pigments and charcoal on canvas, 200 x 300 cm (78 ¾ x 118 ⅞ in)

## Miquel Barceló: Courant Central

14 MAY - 15 JULY 2014

PRIVATE VIEW TUESDAY, 13 MAY 6-8:30PM

Ben Brown Fine Arts Hong Kong is pleased to present an exhibition of recent paintings and ceramics by renowned Spanish artist Miquel Barceló. *Miquel Barceló: Courant Central* will be the second solo exhibition of the artist's work at the Hong Kong gallery and will coincide with Art Basel Hong Kong. The exhibition will include haunting paintings inspired by primitive cave drawings, unique ceramic sculptures and works from his radical new series of stark white canvases.

Miquel Barceló's work has deep roots in his native country and to his lifelong home of Mallorca, Spain. The terrain and climate of Mallorca is a constant presence in his work; from the sea, shoreline and marine life to the red earth, scorching sun and cool breeze. Barceló finds further inspiration in the cultural and architectural traditions of Spain, with the concentric formal qualities and sociological implications of the bullring holding particular fascination for him. Fascinated by his travels in West Africa throughout the 1980s, Barceló eventually built a studio in Mali where he found a similar affinity to the organic qualities of the landscape, which continue to influence and inspire his work today.

The show opens with a group of striking and pristinely white canvases that are at once coolly minimalist, elaborately tactile and highly evocative. Barceló builds layers of pigment and vinyl, creating stratum, drips, spills, mounds and concavities on his canvases. The simple titles of the paintings reference their origin, both literally and metaphorically. *Courant Central* (2013) alludes to a current that runs between Mallorca and an uninhabited island less than a kilometer away. While the journey across looks attainable, there is a powerful central current pulling towards the sea. *Place de Taureaux* (2013), in its layered and rough surface of undulating spheres,

alludes to the traces of vigor, victory, submission and death left behind on the grounds of the bullring after a fight has taken place. Barceló likens the tension of the rings in this painting to the centrifugal and centripetal forces that dictate his life. *Brise Légère du Nord* (2013), with its broad inverted arcs pulling down along the canvas, suggests a light breeze blowing on the water creating an endless and meditative pattern of waves, a visual that is part of the artist's daily existence.

There are four large-scale paintings in the exhibition, built up with coarse layers of aqua blue, black, ochre and yellow, inspired by Barceló's visit to the cave of Pont d'Arc-Ardèche (commonly known as the Chauvet cave) in southern France. This cave, rediscovered in 1994 and considered one of the most important archeological finds in history, holds hundreds of Paleolithic paintings, mainly of animals, that have been remarkably well-preserved. Barceló's canvases teem with ethereal renderings of horse heads, which collectively create an organic, nearly abstract landscape.

Complementing the paintings in the exhibition are a group of unique ceramic works, all reaped from the rich, fertile earth of Barceló's homeland, Mallorca. With their pits, slashes, inclusions and jagged edges, these ceramic vessels celebrate the raw and spontaneous nature of the artist's working method. Barceló has anthropomorphised many of the pieces, such as *Moi et Moi* (2011), adding eyes and suggestions of facial features through paint or recesses in the ceramic.

#### **NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

Miquel Barceló was born in 1957 in Mallorca. He studied at the School of Arts and Crafts in Palma de Mallorca and the Fine Arts Academy in Barcelona. In 1982, Barceló achieved international acclaim for his participation in Documenta VII in Kassel, Germany. In 2004, Barceló's watercolours illustrating Dante's *Divine Comedy* were shown at the Musée du Louvre, Paris, making him the youngest artist ever exhibited at the museum. Barceló represented Spain at the Venice Biennale in 2009. He has exhibited at such prestigious institutions as Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Museo Rufino Tamayo, Mexico and the Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain. His works are included in numerous private and public collections throughout the world. The artist will be in Hong Kong for the opening of the exhibition.

**For further press information and enquires please contact:**

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Monday - Saturday, 11AM - 7PM



**Miquel Barceló, *Moi et Moi*, 2011, ceramic, 51 x 31 cm (20 x 12 ¼ in)**



**Miquel Barceló, *Courant Central*, 2013, pigment and vinyl on canvas, 74 x 105 cm (29 ⅞ x 41 ⅞ in)**