



OUTSIDE THE BOX

JANUARY 19 - MARCH 8, 2008

E. GIBBONS

~IMAGE CATALOG~



a gallery by philip hitchcock designs

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Adore - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The painting is probably one of the more ironic pieces in Gibbons' collection and it contains a hidden sense of humor. The woman adores the perfect man, Michelangelo's *David*, long considered the epitome of male beauty. The irony, of course, is that the statue is cold, lifeless, and non-communicative. The artist makes a commentary on the perfect man... beautiful and silent.



Arbor - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The painting is an unintentional reference to current environmental issues, but also highly symbolic. The figure functions as the custodian for the environment while the tree represents life itself. Historically, trees have been used in a symbolic context, as in the "Tree of Life," "The Family Tree," and "The Tree of Knowledge."



Ariel - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Ariel, God's archangel of wrath depicts the artist's fascination with the dual nature of God: loving yet vengeful. Ariel has his eye on the viewer, appraising him, judging her. He demands inward self-examination and dares the viewer to define sin. Is it violation of divine law or is it a life lived without love?



At Rest - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Often technical expertise in painting the human figure is measured by the treatment given to hands and feet. This piece is a good example of that kind of expertise. The figure's body is centered around his right hand creating a radial symmetry, which the artist describes as a "circle of comfort; a visual hug."



Bacchus- oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The painting is an ode to Caravaggio who was well known for his attention to the male form. Museums are starting to collect modern works of the male form. MoMA NYC purchased a large collection of the works of "Tom Of Finland," The Guggenheim has many of Mapplethorpe's most daring works, and London's Tate Modern, is bolstering its collection of homoerotic works of art.



Blind Justice - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Traditional symbols of justice are shown here including scales, a sword, and a blindfold. The use of a 3' x 3' posing box compels models to utilize their space; forcing their bodies into geometric forms. (The artist uses a slightly larger box for taller models.) All subjects are lit from the left, so no matter how the paintings hang, they have a cohesive quality.



Caesar - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Much of Gibbons' work is steeped in the traditions of Neo-Classical painters like Ingres and Jacques-Louis David. Classical styles emphasize organization of space and the use of allegory. The light scroll visually balances the figure's more massive form by its deliberate brightness. The head and the foot are centered to create the fulcrum for the work. The laurel indicates great power tempered by deeper knowledge.



Christ/ Trinity - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Often the subject for artists, Gibbons' *Christ/ Trinity* is the artist's attempt to reconcile the inconsistencies within his own Christian faith. The artist explores the idea of a packaged, polished, "Christ in a box" brought out as a miraculous convenience when needed, and juxtaposes that idea with the notion of a finite god perceived by his followers to be limited to the confines of a box.

Cross - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The artist's nephew poses here in a Christ-Child persona. Growing up in a Christian Family, with symbols of the church around him, Gibbons wonders if, even as a child, Christ may have known what ultimately awaited him. The painting is also an homage to the innocence of children, and a reminder of society's shared responsibility to protect and care for them.



Diabolic - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Having done many pieces dealing with faith in a historical as well as a personal sense, here the artist uses rich, visual symbolism to depict a demonic figure. The subject delights in his disturbing gaze as, "Nero-like," he plays the violin.



Dream Goddess - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Though the more than half of Gibbons' figures are male, the female figures he paints are strong, often depicted as goddesses or muses. The artist contends that his own feminine energy is represented in these paintings, an offshoot of lucid dreaming when dreams are under the control of the dreamer. The artist maintains that he derives much inspiration from this conscious sleep state.



Eyes Open - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Like so many of Gibbons' paintings, Eyes Open is subject to broad interpretation. Two men appear to demonstrate an affectionate bond between themselves. One man is comfortable and safe. He closes his eyes as his watchful companion stands guard. The guardian's expression is passive yet steadfast. He offers no apology but neither does he offer concessions. He is vigilant, watchful, and alert as he comforts his charge.



Gift - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The figure offers the viewer a rose but it is unclear whether or not there are conditions to his gift. There appear to be ulterior motives at play as if he expects something in return. Or perhaps he offers more than just a rose, and the viewer will be the recipient of an unexpected surprise. Gibbons' paintings often become mirrors for viewers to reveal themselves.



Hera - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

As the bride of Zeus, Hera regains her virginity annually by bathing in spring "Canathus," known to be the protector of women and guardian of childbirth. Here, she connects the blade and the cup, symbols of male and female energies. Gibbons' women are not demure or subservient, but always depicted as powerful and mysterious beings.



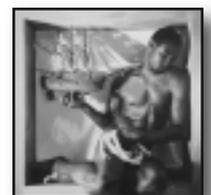
In the Name of the Father - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The artist uses large scale still life paintings as punctuation to the figures in boxes. As with the figures, these paintings are also layered with meaning. Inspired by the current Iraq conflict, symbols of weaponry, destruction, death, and the fragility of humanity are represented here. The title alludes to first Iraq war, begun, as it were, by the father only to be revisited by the son.



Hospitality II - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The title is ironic and it alludes to America's shameful history of slavery. The rope symbolizes bondage but as it is held by the figure, it indicates his control over his own destiny. The boat represents stormy seas and long journeys but is also a direct reference to the slave ship that brought him to the New World as cargo.





Kiss - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

A painting of two lovers shows Gibbons' first attempt at painting a couple. Since the bulk of the artist's work concerns itself with single figures, "couples" represent a new direction. (Gibbons further explores this new direction in March of 2008 when all of his "couples" paintings will be featured in a solo exhibition at the Leslie Lohman Foundation in New York.)



Listening - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Created primarily as a companion piece to interact with other boxes, this piece reveals one of the few figures in boxes who shows an awareness of the other figures in boxes or the larger outside world. Though it stands alone as a man actively listening, the placement of the work in relation to other boxes becomes as important as the work itself.



Lazarus - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Two years of living in Egypt inspired the artist to create this painting even though its title indicates biblical references. Using a darkened environment, the box transforms into a type of tomb mysteriously lit from within. The painting holds many ambiguities about the figure, whose covering appears to be a death shroud, despite the figure's attentive pose and apparent fixation upon the inner illumination of the box.



Lights Out - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

This painting shows an early attempt by the artist to experiment with light as he tries to capture it within the box. The model is one of two brothers who posed for Gibbons (see Sebastian). Notice the toe of the foot breaking the "fourth wall" established by the edge of the box. Many of Gibbons' figures appear to step right out of the painting and into the room.



Mary, Day II - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Mary is often depicted as a regal woman, or one weeping at the feet of her son. Here the artist imagines her on the day after the crucifixion, just one day before the resurrection. Her face shows pain and anger but also stoic hope. She is the Madonna, aware of her son's prophecy while demonstrating strength for his followers, but she is a mother first; and her gaze shows fear, apprehension, and maternal concern.



Perched - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Shown in a bird-like "perch," the figure in this painting appears to search beyond the confines of her home. A mood of melancholy and longing permeates this piece, although the woman clearly appears to be on the verge of a decision or choice. The painting begs the question: "What comes next?"



Poseidon - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Strong geometry influenced by great neo-classical painters like Ingres, is evident here. Drapery functions as an ode to Titan and doubles as a textural reference to water as the muscled figure takes on the classical persona of the God of the Sea. Gibbons captures a monochromatic world of timeless iconography within the framework of the modular box.



Possess- oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The painting alludes loosely to greed, one of the seven deadly sins, but also suggests possessiveness in relationship. The figure holds the vase as if it were a person. His eyes look cautiously outward and confront the viewer. Note the geometric triangulation of the body.

Pour - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

"Z" diagonal geometry is created in this painting by following the line up the figure's leg and through his shoulder. The textures in the kettle are repeated in his foreshortened leg. The painting demonstrates a more dramatic topographical treatment of the body. Black diagonally contrasts the white background. Sexual tones are suggested here by the position of the kettle which doubles as an expression of his maleness.



Prayer - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Before a great trials or challenges in his life, the warrior looks for spiritual guidance. Here, the figure is turned inward, away from the light for a quiet space to reflect or pray. His sword is not perpendicular, suggesting personal doubt as to the success of the outcome.



Repose - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Rip Van Winkle may have been the germination for this image but the 89 year old man who posed for this painting is depicted in a gentle sleep state. The artist seems to indicate that death, a peaceful reclamation of the body, is not to be feared.



See No Evil - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Using a sculpted stone head as a surrogate for another person, the artist explores the idea of secrets within a family. Gibson asserts that bonds are formed by common denial among family members. Instead of removing his own blindfold, the figure chooses to cover the eyes of the other.



Sound - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

This painting shows a figure attempting to interact with other figures in boxes, and is one of a handful of Gibbons' figures who shows an awareness of the other figures in boxes. Though it stands alone as a figure playing a trumpet, the placement of the work in relation to other boxes becomes significant.



Sphere I - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Described by the artist as a "turning point" in his series, this painting shows a highly focused image and marks the point where Gibbons fully embraces the monochromatic pallet. This is one of a very few pieces where the figure appears to "float," an effect achieved by placing box and model on the floor and rendering him from the overhead vantage point of a ladder. An ethereal, otherworldly quality is the result.



Sphere II - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Spheres have a special significance to the artist, who has a collection of over 100 different types. According to Gibbons, "They fascinate me in their simplicity and magical measurements like the infinitely repeating Pi." Here the sphere appears to be earth-like, held in the hands of Atlas or perhaps the Creator.



St. Sebastian - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Sebastian was a miracle worker during his lifetime, and though typically depicted shot with arrows, his death was actually due to his encounter with Emperor Diocletian years later. The illustrations of Sebastian date back to 527AD and continue to resonate with artists, including Gibbons, who paints him as a man of conviction and a martyr for his beliefs.





Tidy - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The classical image of the bather is reinterpreted as a figure washing his environment. It is rare that Gibbons' imagery addresses the box specifically, but here the subject interacts with his cubicle.



Wisdom II - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

The figure appears here as the personification of wisdom as suggested by his age. (The man who posed for Gibbons is 89 years old.) He is perhaps a judge or a king reading a decree. Perhaps he is St. Peter recounting the deeds of the viewer's life.



Witness - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Certainly one of Gibbons' most powerful paintings, *Witness* captures the likeness 90 year old "Blanch," who poses here. She is shown "as is," without apology. A Holocaust survivor, her body reveals experiences lived, and trials overcome. She is a woman with no time for trivialities and a heart that still has room for loving more people. She is a tribute to herself and her generation and has truly transcended the limitations of the "box."



Young Buddha - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Having lived and worked in various regions including the far east, the artist grappled with creating on a Buddha Image that would satisfy his personal aesthetic. This younger version, "Amida Buddha," depicted as a thin younger man, shows a different incarnation than the familiar Fat Buddha most people know.



Youth - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Shown here is the subject painted just days after his 18th birthday. The symbols here are easy to read, an hour-glass near it's starting point, the figure posed to commence a journey, similar to the stance of a prepared runner. He is ripe with hope, possibility, and beauty.



Upon Our Backs - oil on canvas, 30" x 30"

Suggesting servitude to either God or man, this painting demonstrates Gibbons' mastery of painting both objects and figures. It also reminds viewers that buildings and cities are built, in this case literally, on the backs of laborers.

(Smaller works pictured below) - oil on canvas, 12" x 12"

Gibbons' smaller still-life paintings focus on the objects in his larger works. Each object is a symbol with its own set of meanings taken from classical, biblical, and secular references, with the addition of the artist's own personal interpretations. Gibbons selects objects that are timeless so that the paintings appear as though they might have been created decades ago or within the last year.

Blade Emerging

Brass Bell

Crystal Clear

Cup Half Full

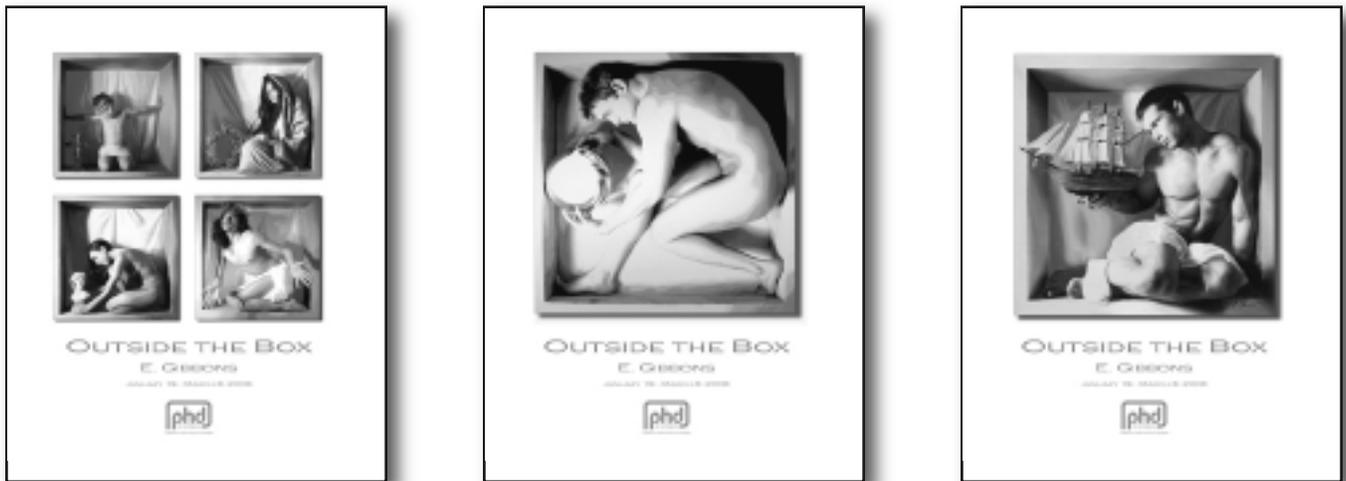
Floating Shell

Key

Out of the Vase

Rose in Vase





Limited Edition Prints - inkjet on acid free paper, 16" x 20"

phd gallery in association with artist E. Gibbons is offering three limited edition prints reproduced on heavyweight, acid free paper. Each edition of 36 prints is signed and numbered by the artist. Prints are available unframed or framed in black wood. Shown above is a grouping of four paintings (*Cross, Mary Day II, Adore, and Christ/ Trinity.*) as they hung at phd gallery in 2008 and singular prints of *Sphere I* and *Poseidon*.

The Box Series is comprised of more than 120, black & white paintings, which are virtually life-size. The oil on canvas works reveal male and female nude figures - inside boxes. Gibbons creates these works by painting live models who posed inside three-by-three foot boxes. He uses a multiple-layered line technique that creates a kind of topographical map for the human body, which he then blends to construct rendered flesh forms.

Although Gibbons near life-size paintings are often sold one at a time, they are intended to be displayed in groups of 2 to 100. They are purposefully all lit from the left so that no matter the space or arrangement they are always cohesive. Like the AIDS Quilt, a single painting can be touching and meaningful, but when seen with its counterparts, it takes on additional significance. Adjoining paintings influence the meaning of each work, like people in neighboring apartments. A figure listening to a wall could be paired with a figure playing music but would have a different context if paired with a figure weeping. These pairings nudge meanings in a way few other artists attempt, creating subtle nuances and changing connotations--his message is one of community, relationships, and associations. Though his figures are in a box, they are as much defined by its containment as they are the place outside the box.

“My goal in creating the ‘Box Series’ is to join the formalism and morality messages of the Neoclassical period with contemporary allegories, understandable to today's viewers, while still maintaining a timelessness,” said Gibbons. The New Jersey artist, who gleans inspiration from classical painters like Michelangelo, Ingres and Neo- Classicist, Jacques-Louis, creates an amazing array of images that impact the viewer on an emotional level. Biblical, mythological, and societal themes imbue the work with meaning easily accessible to viewers. Multicultural figures reflect the artist's world travels and his intent to speak to a larger audience. Viewers bring their own packages of prejudice and background to their experience of the work. Whereas some images confront the viewer, others recede, while some welcome the viewer’s gaze and others outright reject it. The use of limited color combined with the complexity of subject matter and space, create powerfully focused and iconic images that express artist’s center of attention.

Gibbons is a fourth generation artist who began to draw before he was able to speak. He attended the college of New Jersey and studied Asian painting techniques at Kansai University in Osaka, Japan. He has been emphasizing the male figure since the late 1980's.



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