

## For immediate release and listing:

### Shawn Barber

*Tattooed Portraits: Chronicle*

April 24–May 22, 2010

Opening reception: Saturday, April 24, 6–9 PM

Joshua Liner Gallery is pleased to present *Tattooed Portraits: Chronicle*, an exhibition of new paintings by the Los Angeles-based artist Shawn Barber. This is Barber's first solo show in New York City.

As a painter documenting contemporary tattoo practices, Barber broadly comments on the act of mark-making itself, on multiple levels, including aspects of the pictorial, the sensual, the practical, and the personal. In these twenty new paintings and eight works on paper, many of them portraits of friends and clients who have sat for Barber, the artist draws on his interest in the conventions of portraiture, the handling of paint, and the specialized milieu of his dual occupations as both a fine artist and a tattoo artist (terms that are perhaps interchangeable here).

Barber appears to relish both—his meticulous brush strokes, in oils on canvas, echo the intricate patterns of needle on skin depicted in these lush works. He treats these surfaces in much the same way; the vivid palette and subtle shadings used to recreate the tattoo designs are just as crucial to capturing the varying tonalities of skin, shadow, and setting. Indeed, the settings for Barber's portraits are just as engrossing as his colorful subjects. Several works offer views of the artist's and his colleagues' studios "at rest," with myriad tools, paints, animal heads, and other personal effects existing quietly amid the lovingly rendered clutter. In part, this series is a tribute to Barber's roots and youth spent in upstate New York.

If tattoos can be viewed as rites of passage, Barber has embodied these symbols of change in the loose compositions, meandering lines, occasional paint drips, and dynamic subjects of his work. One of the most arresting is the tall portrait of painter Thomas Woodruff, portrayed standing before one of his own dazzling works. Nude and tattooed, Woodruff's skin is also depicted as alive with images, Barber's suggestion, perhaps, that all of existence is a canvas for human energy and imagination.

Born in 1970 in Cortland, New York, Shawn Barber received a BFA degree in 1999 from Ringling School of Art & Design in Sarasota, Florida. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Selected solo exhibitions of his work include: *Tattooed Portraits*, The Shooting Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2009); *Tattooed Portraits: Los Angeles*, Billy Shire Fine Arts, Culver City, CA (2008); and *Somber Beginnings*, Lineage Gallery, Philadelphia, PA (2007). His work has also been featured in group exhibitions, including: *The Art of Rebellion*, Robert Berman Gallery, Santa Monica, CA (2009); *Visionaries*, Canvas Gallery Los Angeles (2008); *We'll Make A Lover Out of You*, South Florida Art Center, Miami (2006). *Tattooed Portraits*, a book of Shawn Barber's art, was published by 9mm Books in 2006. His second monograph, *Forever and Ever* was released in 2008.

Joshua Liner Gallery, located in New York City's Chelsea Arts district, presents an exciting roster of established and emerging artists from North America, Asia, and Europe.

For more information, please visit [www.joshualinergallery.com](http://www.joshualinergallery.com), or contact Tim Strazza at 212.244.7415 or [tim@joshualinergallery.com](mailto:tim@joshualinergallery.com).



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