

FRED TORRES COLLABORATIONS

527 W 29TH ST, NEW YORK, NY 10001 T212.244.5074 F212.244.5075 FREDTORRES.COM

Gallery Guide

February 2012



David LaChapelle *Earth Laughs in Flowers*

On view February 23-March 24, 2012

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527 West 29th Street, New York, NY 10001
212-244-5074 | www.fredtorres.com

Fred Torres Collaborations presents *Earth Laughs In Flowers*, an important new series of ten large-scale photographs by David LaChapelle.

First shown at the Kestnergesellschaft Museum in Hannover, Fred Torres Collaborations will exhibit the entire series for the first time to the U.S. public.

In *Earth Laughs In Flowers* David LaChapelle appropriates the traditional Baroque still life painting in order to explore contemporary vanity, vice, the transience of earthly possessions and, ultimately, the fragility of humanity. Expectations of the still life are satisfied through the inclusion of symbolic objects such as fruit, flowers and skulls, but also upended by the insertion of everyday items such as cell phones, cigarette butts, balloons, Barbies, and a Starbucks' iced coffee cup. This last effect is exacerbated by a tortuous disorderliness

overwhelming the composition. The resulting photographs achieve a painterly, almost sculptural quality, thereby challenging the traditions of painting.

The title *Earth Laughs in Flowers* comes from the poem "Hamatreya" (1846) by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), in which flowers articulate nature's ridicule and contempt for human arrogance in the pretense to dominion over earth.

Where are these men? Asleep beneath their grounds:
And strangers, fond as they, their furrows plough.
Earth laughs in flowers, to see her boastful boys
Earth-proud, proud of the earth which is not theirs;
Who steer the plough, but cannot steer their feet,
Clear of the grave.

The titles of the works refer to the cycles of the seasons and of life: Springtime, Late Summer, Early Fall, Deathless Winter, and Concerning the Soul. In typical *momento mori* fashion, the works invite us in, beg our self-reflection, and remind us to enjoy life before it is over.

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Born in 1963, David LaChapelle studied visual arts at the North Carolina School of the Arts, the Art Students League and the School of Visual Arts in New York. His photography career began in the 1980's showing his artwork in New York City galleries. LaChapelle's works caught the eye of Andy Warhol and the editors of Interview, who invited him to contribute to the magazine. Current solo museum exhibitions include Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague, Seoul Arts Center Hangaram Design Museum, and the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Puerto Rico.

In collaboration with Robilant + Voena and St. Moritz Art Masters, Earth Laughs In Flowers is also on view at St. Moritz Art Masters, Reformierte Dorfkirche, Via Maistra 18, St. Moritz 7500, February 11 - 26; Robilant + Voena Gallery, 38 Dover Street, London W1S4NL, February 14 - March 24, 2012; Robilant + Voena Gallery, Via Fontana 16, Milano 20122, February 16 - March 24.

For more information, please contact Yana Balson, Director, Fred Torres Collaborations, New York, by email at director@fredtorres.com or by phone at 212-244-5074.