

# RYAN LEE

RYAN LEE GALLERY LLC  
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*Michael Mazur: Stoneham Zoo (1976-1979)*  
October 16 – November 15, 2014  
Opening: Thursday, October 16, 6-8PM

RYAN LEE is pleased to announce *Stoneham Zoo (1976-1979)*, a selection of paintings and monumental pastel portraits of caged primates by **Michael Mazur**. This is the first time these works have been exhibited in New York since the artist's groundbreaking show at Robert Miller Gallery more than 30 years ago.

In the late 1970s, during a strong realist movement in the art world, Mazur returned to the subject of captivity, a theme which recurred in several phases of his career, beginning with his renowned hospital series, *Closed Ward* (1962-63), which portrays the most afflicted residents in a psychiatric ward. Throughout his life, Mazur addressed the individual human condition as well as society's role in exploitative policies and systems of confinement. The work demands of himself and viewers recognition of the abused and forgotten. *The American Way Room* (1968), a wall and floor installation in an empty storefront where viewers walked over images of victims of the Vietnam war, brought his anti-war position to public spaces. His monotype collaboration, with poet laureate Robert Pinsky, of Dante's *Inferno* confronts states of relentless anguish.

In a 1993 interview with the Archives of American Art, Mazur said "I decided to do some work on the monkey cages at Stoneham Zoo, which were very depressed and reminded me of the mental hospital. It was a strange return to the hospital work via the world of animals." His mastery of pastel is essential to the Stoneham Zoo pieces. The medium provided him with a way to combine elements of drawing and painting. Pastel's directness of touch gives a visceral feeling of movement. The primates are on edge, yet in stasis. Tangible despair and the inhumane nature of zoos are conveyed in these portraits of the primates in their looming, barren cages. Light and shadow capture the dualities of passivity and tension within the images. A psychological intensity is heightened by Mazur's extreme color choices and representation of space.

Michael Mazur (1935-2009) is internationally recognized for his paintings, drawings, and prints. He experimented with and moved fluidly between ideas and media. He was invited to represent the US in the 1970 Venice Biennale, but declined to participate in protest of the Vietnam War. He exhibited widely in 160 solo and group shows, and in 2000, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston held a major traveling retrospective. His work is in several prominent collections, including the British Museum, UK; Castelvechio Verona, IT; Cleveland Museum of Art, OH; de Cordova Museum, MA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; McNay Art Museum, TX; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; Museum of Modern Art, NY; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; Yale University Art Gallery, CT; and Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, NJ.

Concurrently on view is *Joan Logue: Video Portraits* of Jasper Johns (1979) and Noam Chomsky (2011).  
Forthcoming exhibitions at the gallery include new work by **Seong Chun** and **Kevin Cooley**, both of which will be on view November 20th through January 10th.

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