

## Heide Hatry

### *Icons in Ash: Cremation Portraits*

December 8, 2016 – March 7, 2017

Opening Reception: December 13, 2016

**Ubu Gallery** is pleased to announce the debut exhibition of Heide Hatry's extraordinary new body of work, *Icons in Ash: Cremation Portraits*. The portrayal of the human image arose many millennia ago precisely for the purpose of keeping the dead among us. Not just in memory, but in charged ceremonial objects that were intended to embody and preserve their spirits for their survivors and for the community as a whole. It was a way of integrating the inexplicable fact of death into life, of insuring that the dead and what they meant stayed present and abided in us. Heide Hatry, an intellectually challenging German visual artist working in New York, has created a new technique and purpose for portraiture, employing actual human ashes to create meditative images of deceased people, either at their own behest or that of their families.



From left: **Paul Schmid**, 2009; **Emily Jordan Boxer**, 2016; **Tasia Brown**, 2012; Mixed media (loose ash particles, pulverized birch coal, white marble dust, beeswax), 14 x 11 inches (35.6 x 27.9 cm) each

The exhibition is particularly relevant and timely in light of the Vatican's response on October 25th to what it called an "unstoppable increase" in cremation and its issuance of guidelines barring the scattering of ashes "in the air, on land, at sea or in some other way." The Vatican decreed that the ashes of loved ones have no place in the home, and certainly not in jewelry. While the Vatican was silent on the use of ashes in painting, we can assume that Hatry's work falls outside its newly articulated "canonical norms" and within its idea of "unfitting or superstitious practices."

The project is accompanied by the book publication, *Heide Hatry: Icons in Ash*, in which twenty-seven contributing authors, including Siri Hustvedt, Lydia Millet, Rick Moody, Mark Dery, Peter Weibel, Eleanor Heartney, Steven Pinker, Hans Belting, Wolf Singer, and Luisa Valenzuela have offered a multiplicity of perspectives on the human relationship to death. These cover a wide range of topics, from art history through anthropology, psychology, philosophy, semiotics, ecology, and beyond, as well as discussing death taboos, post-mortem practices, personal experience, the impact of the relic and more. A social, deeply humanistic, and an aesthetic project, *Icons in Ash*, proposes an alternative to the way we see and interact with death, in particular a radically different approach to mourning and consolation, as well as to how we understand the purpose of art at its most fundamental level.

The exhibition can be viewed from December 8, 2016 to March 7, 2017 at Ubu Gallery, which is located at 416 East 59th Street in Manhattan. An opening reception will be held on December 13, 2016 from 6:30—8:30PM.

During the run of the exhibition, panel discussions, readings, concerts, conversations, and spoken word performances relating to death, including both participating authors and others, will take place at a number of locations throughout New York City. The events and their details will be announced on both Ubu Gallery's and the artist's websites.

For further information or images, please contact Ubu Gallery at 212 753 4444 or email [info@ubugallery.com](mailto:info@ubugallery.com)