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THE ESTATE OF JOEL MESLER *AMERICAN PEOPLE*

Organized by Carlos Cardenas in collaboration with Cultural Counsel

20.10.16 – 26.11.2016
Opening Thursday 20th, 2016
7pm – 9pm

TORRI is pleased to present *American People*, the first exhibition of The Estate of Joel Mesler in Europe. Taking as their subjects failed sports figures, these eight new paintings expand the artist-dealer's exploration of doubt and acceptance. Featuring reoccurring motifs in his work—fatherhood, the sea, wordplay—the works of *American People* find Mesler engaging the cult of athletic worship, finding poignant grace in those men who fell short.

Though known foremost as a gallerist, Joel Mesler was trained as an artist and has created work throughout his career, often at home after his children go to bed. These periods of productivity are often marked by fervent output, and are followed by periods of creative dormancy, during which the pressures of career, family life, or artistic doubt make creation impossible. Tracing the contours of his career, one can identify several pronounced periods of art-making, each with a clear end and beginning. Since each painting could be his last, the work is most clearly seen as something in a semi-final condition. It is an estate—a term normally reserved for the work of a deceased artist.

These new paintings mimic the precarious existence of the entire oeuvre. Painted with spare brushwork on raw linen, they are both incomplete and beyond the fact, hopeful and forlorn. They are certain of their existence of being unsure of themselves. Here, Mesler focuses on failed sports heroes—a paradoxical group who have succeeded by failing, who are remembered by being forgettable. Treating the memory of these athletes with empathy, and perhaps linking their plight to his feelings about his own artistic successes and shortcomings, *American People* presents Mesler's most poignant work to date—a humane, yet unflinching look at those who came so close to what they wanted.

Born in Los Angeles in 1974, Joel Mesler received an MFA from San Francisco Art Institute. Since opening his first gallery Dianne Pruess in Los Angeles in 2000, he has worked as a dealer and an artist. He has operated several galleries over the past two decades, including Rental in Los Angeles and New York, Untitled in New York, and Retrospective in Hudson, NY. Recent exhibitions include The Estate of Joel Mesler, presented by Cultural Counsel at NADA, NY, and Fish People, presented by Sotheby's S2 and Cultural Counsel at the Surf Lodge in Montauk, NY. He currently co-owns Feuer/Mesler with Zach Feuer. He lives in New York with his wife and three children.

Cultural Counsel is a New York-based consultancy focused on communications, strategic partnerships, and the development of public programming in the worlds of contemporary art, design, and architecture. Through our valued relationships with artists, writers, curators, patrons, and creative professionals, we facilitate significant contributions to the cultural dialogue. Established by Adam Abdalla in 2015.