

**PRESS RELEASE**

*Into my arms*, casein & oil canvas, 55 x 71 cm

## **YVES BERGER** *Mountain Grass*

Paintings 2013

13 September – 11 October 2013

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Art Space Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of paintings by **Yves Berger** that will be his first solo exhibition in London.

**Yves Berger** was born (1976) and grew up in a remote Alpine village in France. He trained in Geneva and although he has travelled widely and exhibited work in many European cities he continues to live in the Haute-Savoie where he shares his time between his practice as a painter and the demands and rhythms of a small farmstead that he works on for a part of every day.

There is much of the landscape that surrounds him in his paintings but there is nothing idyllic or pastoral about them. This he eschews. On the whole, the world he presents us with is that of a single isolated figure: a man a woman or a child, either nude or in the simplest of garments. There are no dramas no stories no obvious contact with the everyday, no irony and no preaching but a retreat into a private sanctuary where memories and past associations hold a deeper meaning. As alluded to in the exhibition title these paintings are about remembering an imprint, not as a sight to depict but an absence to fill.

*Because the mountain grass  
Cannot but keep the form  
Where the mountain hare has lain.*

W.B. Yates (1919) 'Memory'. *The Wild Swans at Coole*

Within the work is a feeling of immense patience and slow organic growth. It is as if he starts with a theme and a feeling for the general character of a painting and from out of the wealth of experience – for he no longer paints in front of the subject – an image emerges from an embryonic beginning. This is painting at the very edge of reality and reason; it sits nervously on a precipice and evokes a precarious balancing act between the domestic and the sacred, recklessness and care, hesitation and determination.

**Yves Berger**, son of a famous author, has grown up enjoying the advantages of a highly civilized home environment yet remote enough from the heat and violence and speed of urban culture to retain a degree of detachment and a close contact with the living surface of the earth. This heady mixture of culture, earthy realism and a freedom from urban materialism and 'Art world' politics would seem to be the prime ingredients of his practice as a painter.