

# MORGAN LEHMAN

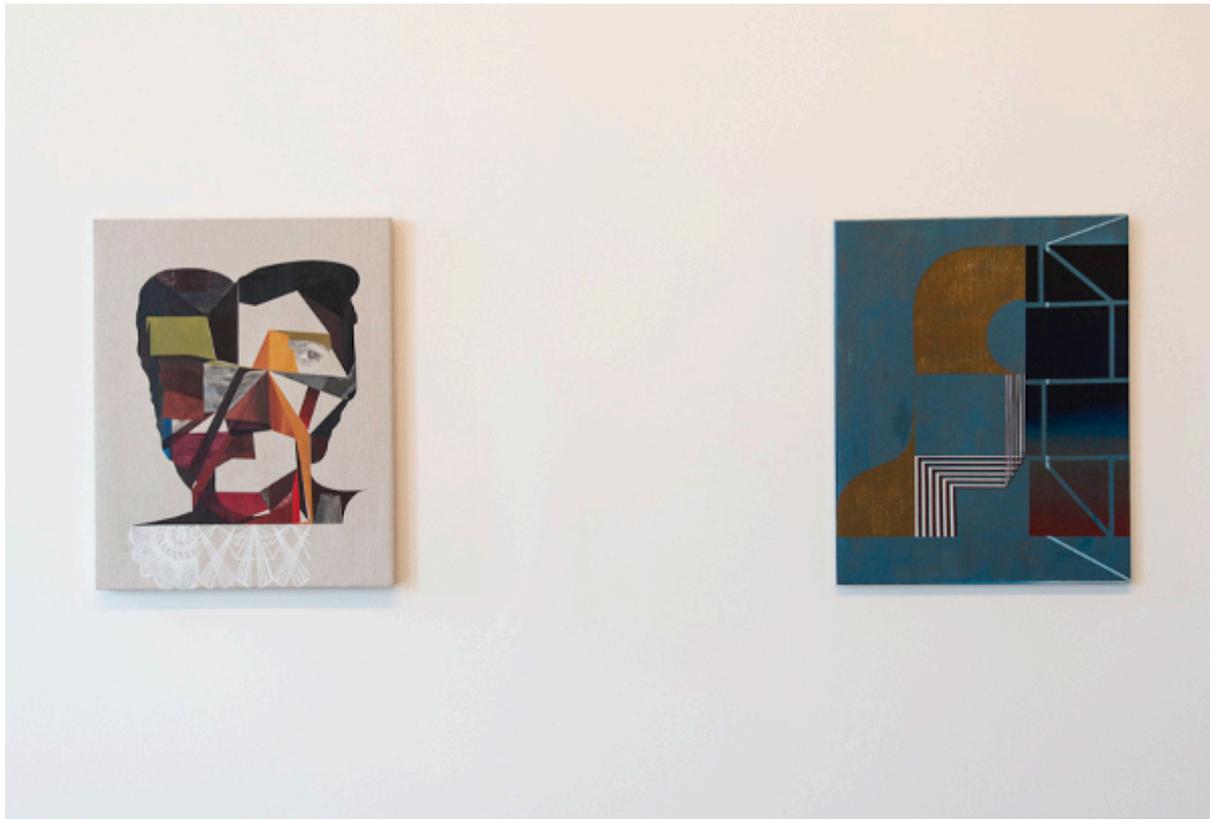
535 West 22nd Street, New York, New York 10011



## Rubens Ghenov and a mystery wrapped in an enigma

September 25, 2012 by Chip Schwartz in Philadelphia

Rubens Ghenov has a solo painting exhibit at Tiger Strikes Asteroid right now, but his abstract forms, although the outward face of the show, are only a portion of the full concept at hand. Along with his sharp, textured paintings, Ghenov provides an essay by Ana Monique Abe and a short documentary film, which examine a couple of disparate concepts that come together for a visually and intellectually stimulating experience.



*Rubens Ghenov, "Tanin no kao 1, Perek pererecando" and "O Lado Redondo do Quadr(a)d(o)."*  
Photo courtesy Jaime Alvarez

The title of the exhibition is "The Silent H" which is a nod to Ghenov's first language – Portuguese – in which the letter 'h' at the beginning of a word is silent. The artist notes that, with this in mind, the English word 'history' would therefore essentially double as a 'story.' This blurring of the lines between fact and fiction is exactly the territory that

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Ghenov wishes to explore. He does so by means of visual abstractions that are, more often than not, highly indiscernible, yet crisp and precise in their presentation.



*Rubens Ghenov, "Mangueir(a)d(o)-a" and "Hiroshi." Photo courtesy Jaime Alvarez*

When Ghenov's images are identifiable, they generally take on the rough shape of a human face or any number of inanimate objects like a guitar. All of the visual breakdowns resemble those of Cubist painters from the early 20th century, in which faceted sections of reality reveal multiple perspectives and angles. Such a philosophy in painting is highly conducive to the theme of the story versus the reality. Presenting us with images cobbled together in bits and pieces, Ghenov illustrates that we are always only viewing the world from our individual corner of existence. While the abstract paintings force us to think inside the box in a way (we all have limitations), they also make us acutely aware of the box and its dimensions.

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*A shot of the documentary about Algia Adamus. Photo courtesy Jaime Alvarez*

Accompanying the paintings are an essay and a documentary which help Ghenov round out his ideas utilizing non-visual media and other people's perspectives. The documentary is part of a canceled television series about female electronic music artists, one of whom is a major focus of this show. Algia Adamus was an obscure poet whose recordings and creations were nearly all lost to time – if they ever existed in the first place. Very little evidence is left of her besides the story as told by the woman who employed her in her home. Her poetic recordings were broken down from words into electronic noises which were representative of words without meaning.

In the essay, Abe explains: "The story of Algia Adamus is found at this precise juncture where fact, fiction and poetry mingle muddily, all ending in sound that turns silent." This excerpt is extremely telling of the show as a whole. All of the words and images here tumble together to provide something wholly unreal, yet strangely concrete. Rubens Ghenov concocts a puzzling portrait of a world through meaningless sounds and visual cacophonies where the silence tells us more than words.

Tiger Strikes Asteroid is located at 319A North 11th St., Philadelphia, Suite 2H; 484-469-0319; [tigerstrikesasteroid.com](http://tigerstrikesasteroid.com).