

# **Ruben Talberg**

**New York.** In town for the Pool Art Fair, March 4 – 6, held on East 27<sup>th</sup> Street, German-Israeli painter, sculptor, and photographer Ruben Talberg presented his recent series of canvases titled "Abraxas."

A native of Germany, Talberg runs the TAMU Talberg Museum in Offenbach, where over 20 years of his paintings and sculptures are on display.

For Talberg, the artist transforming his materials into art is analogous to the medieval alchemist's attempt to transform lead into gold. Ultimately, he says, the artist as maker "transforms himself through his artworks."

In the Abraxas series, moving beyond the abstract-expressionism of his earlier, larger paintings, Talberg creates multi-layered constructs based on the alchemic principal of the "conversion of opposites" where he explores, in his own words, "the evil which – inter alia – manifests itself in the holocaust".

– an exploration that brings to mind the works of Anselm Kiefer and his interest in alchemy and Jewish History.

Here Talberg subverts expectations by reversing the canvases and building black and white three-dimensional artworks that assault the senses and leave the viewer with a macabre feeling of foreboding. Confrontational, stark, abstract, these works shock with garish, bold, emotionally menacing surfaces, creating a rich web of ideas, images, and texts that challenge the observer to decipher meanings.

Bold sweeping arcs of gritty black tar are slabbed on the reverse side of canvasses across the stretchers' wood frames, along with superimposed collages of original poems, shards of torn newspapers, calligraphy, ancient symbols, and medieval seals – all reflections of Talberg's interests in the Kabala, and the themes of Eros and Thanatos.

Along with encrypted talismanic symbols, Talberg adds his unique handwriting, a form of archaic pictographic language tracing back to the secret signs/codes of ancient times – elements that remind the viewer of the works of graffiti artist Jean-Michel Basquiat.

H. Rauterberg writes, " Talberg sovereignly searches for his own themes and content, investigating the strategies of imagination accumulated over the centuries in various cultures and times."

His art is not for the faint-hearted. Nor does it offer up its meanings for the casual observer. Like all things worthwhile, it calls for serious observation, reflection, and a willingness to seek out hidden epiphanies.

Prof. R. Corrigan, New York