

## MARK BORGHI

NEW YORK | BRIDGEHAMPTON | SAG HARBOR

Donald Baechler (born 1956)

*History Lesson*, 2006

Gesso, flashe, graphite and paper collage on paper

51 ¼ x 39 ½ inches (130.2 x 100.3 cm)

Signed verso

Ex-collection:

The Artist

Cheim and Read

Private collection until 2016

Exhibition:

*Donald Baechler* September 14 – October 28 2016, Cheim and Read, New York, NY



Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1956, Donald Baechler studied at the Maryland Institute College of Art, in Baltimore, MD at Cooper Union, New York, NY and at Staatliche Hochschule für bildende Künste, "Staedelschule" Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He came of age as a painter in the early 1980s when he began exhibiting internationally.

Donald Baechler was a member of the East Village art scene in the 1980s and is frequently associated with Jean Dubuffet and Art Brut. He engages with everyday objects with a sense of wandering, explorative innocence. Critics have stated that Donald Baechler's work "places him in the painterly tribe of Twombly, Ryman, Rauschenberg and Schwitters." Baechler works from his great inventory of worldly images; Recorded on slides and collected in the archives of his enormous lower Manhattan studio, they are the sources for many of the compelling images in his paintings and graphic work. The cast of characters, including the artist himself, come from every source imaginable and are stamped, silk-screened, projected, drawn, painted, printed or collaged onto his surfaces. Then the process begins with under painting, over painting, canceling, adding, subtracting, editing until the final work emerges.

Known for his collage works that combine painting, drawing and the artist's language of graphics, the works concerns are primarily formal, he often uses the vague representation of a human head or face seen at side view. Eventually painting a foreground image onto his collage works, this imagery while often "flat" in appearance captures the texture of the surface behind it. The purpose and intentionality behind the chosen imagery may stem from the time it takes in the studio to inform Baechler's decision making process. Referencing the untrained artist, Baechler make his imagery digestible and easily able to recognize. History Lesson, 2006 presents the audience with two children as his Press Release from this exhibition notes, "...along with children's art, art of the insane, and the drunk doodling at the bar, Baechler points out the construction of images in society and questions the structure of artistic representation."<sup>1</sup> The artist is known for wanting to create the "illusion of history", which is what he conveys in this perplexing work.

Donald Baechler has a large international following and his work can be seen in museums throughout the world. The artist lives and works in New York City.

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<sup>1</sup> *Donald Baechler* September 14 – October 28 2016, Cheim and Read, New York, NY