Press release

November 2011
Verne Dawson
November 17 to December 23, 2011
Opening, Wednesday, November 16, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

With a solo exhibition of the american painter Verne Dawson, Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to show new works.

Increasingly well-known since the mid-1980s, especially in New York, Dawson's painting focuses with positively anthropological zeal on the history of humankind's evolution and impact in dialog with the world around it. The universal manner in which the artist views and examines the world is evident in his complex cycles of works. Recurring themes including astrology, numerology, religion and mythology become the key sources from which his pictorial narratives are fed. In this way, Dawson's works offer a door to a world which has always existed, and which still exists, but which has been marginalized by the many-layered interconnections of modern civilisation.

When Dawson gives one of his new works the Native American title Apalachicola, he immediately takes the viewer behind the harmless-looking surface of the picture. On a path that winds its way through primeval vegetation, a line of people move towards the beach of a nearby sandy bay. Between them, on their shoulders, they carry a smouldering fire, its column of smoke rising into a gloomy sky. Here, the landing of the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto at Apalachicola Bay in the Gulf of Mexico becomes a threatening prophecy of imminent expulsion from a primal paradise. Another painting, Tallahassee, also has its roots in de Soto's devastating and bloody voyage of discovery. After a night of drinking, a ghostly skeleton slings the naked body of a young woman, wine glass still in hand, over his shoulder. Once again, the title is a Native American reference, as the land on which the city of Tallahassee now stands once belonged to the hunting grounds of the Seminole Indians. Today, college students hold excessive weekend parties there.

At the same time, the sheer pleasure Dawson takes in painting can always be sensed in his work. As he says: "One year of Hans Haacke's sculpture class, where students brought in fifteen conceptual art projects every week, convinced me that the preservation of the past, of painting, was the most interesting and challenging endeavour a conceptual artist could choose." Portraits like Ugo and John, as well his self-portrait, are subtly observed, as are the avian couple who meet up in Two Birds On A Wire.

The Old Mill Calendar, a room-filling work conceived as a mural that was recently shown at the Yokohama Triennial, consists of four large-format canvases. Where the individual panels meet, colours and forms continue from one pictorial space into the next, presenting the viewer with a cycle that describes the path of life on earth from darkness to light, from low to high tide, from winter to summer, from happiness to misery, and from birth to death.

The essential monograph "Verne Dawson" was published recently by Les Presses du Réel, Dijon.

For further information, please contact Björn Alfers (b.alfers@presenhuber.com) at Galerie Eva Presenhuber.

Opening hours:	Tuesday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by arrangement.
Forthcoming exhibition:	Oscar Tuazon Opening, January 11, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. January 12 to February 18, 2012