

## RYAN METKE 'TIME TROVE'

29<sup>th</sup> October – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2014

Ryan Metke is a contemporary artist based in New York City. Inspired by the remarkable true story of art dealer and archaeologist Forrest Fenn who, following diagnosis of cancer, buried \$3m of treasure including gold nuggets, rare coins, jewellery and gemstones in the Rocky Mountains north of Sante Fe in 2010, Ryan Metke has created a series of paintings containing clues to discovering hidden treasure troves around the globe. Deposited with the intention of being undiscovered for centuries, the treasure troves will form the basis of a conversation between the artist and the discoverer, creating a personal dialogue between them that links the present with the future.

The images within Metke's paintings and installations are a topographical collage of human senses and symbols. Inspired by the tales of legendary explorers such as Thor Heyerdahl, William Kydd and Ernest Shackleton, Metke's cartographic compositions also tell a story, encouraging the viewer to take part in the narrative dialogue. Deciphering the content of his work will take the viewer on a trek across the globe, culminating in the discovery of a hidden capsule or a treasure trove deposited by Metke.

Although Metke's work is centered on the classical platforms of painting and sculpture, they often defy classical conjecture, extending into the gamut of performance and installation art. Metke's work invites the viewer to participate in his work and acknowledge the viewer as an integral part of the creative experience.

Ryan Metke (b.1980) received his formal training in painting and sculpture from the Savannah College of Art and design. After graduating in 2003, he moved to Manhattan where he lived and produced artwork for several years in Chinatown. Ryan currently works out of his studio, housed in an old bathhouse in Brooklyn. He continues to receive inspiration through his surroundings and thrives on everyday contact with humanity and environment. Ryan has completed numerous commissions, group, and personal showings, yet carries on with his search for a treasure chest full of booty.

*“There are many lessons to be learned from the patchwork of contour lines that make up a map. Most of the time we look at maps only to figure out how to get from one point to another but upon closer inspection, there is more than meets the eye. The geographical topography that lives on today reveals evidence of millions of years of tectonic movement, climate change and hydrological and biological events. Social and political issues have last been scribbled between many lines on our maps. A continuous evolution assures us that no line is permanent; battles and treaties, glaciers and volcanoes have all been responsible for these lines that make up our planet’s collective history.*

*The focus of my work is to draft my own maps. The result is a topographical collage of the human experience that demonstrates the challenges and beauties that the natural world has given us. Just like a road map, these works are approachable. Along with the use of a familiar iconography that a Cro-Magnon could interpret, I urge the viewer to follow my lines. The cartographic compositions guide the viewer’s eyes into the deeper narrative.*

*My intent is not dissimilar to the artists responsible for the Hall of the Bulls in Lascaux, France. Although I have better access to more colors I aim to provide only the dialogue. The viewer is left to his/her own interpretations.*

*The paintings or maps in ‘Time Trove’ are not limited to the two dimensional surfaces of the gallery walls. I invite the viewer to participate and acknowledge them as an integral part of the creative experience. If the viewer is so inclined, decipher some of the clues and go for an adventure. The paintings could lead to a series of hidden troves deposited around the globe, the contents of which are different depending on each mission, generally 49% art, maps and photographs, 30% scientific, historical, cultural and educational items and 20% survival, tools and seeds and 1% additional clues. All of the troves are deposited with the intent that they may not be found for hundreds of years.*

*Depositing these capsules allows me the opportunity and the power to write history in my own words on a very small scale; I can hold a conversation with someone that might not even be born yet. Hopefully long after I am gone someone will find one of these troves, finish off the hundred year aged whiskey and learn about the past. It might even lead them to something else, if they are up for the hunt. Full circle.”*

*Embracing the technology of the day. Using QR codes as a vessel to bring the viewer in a little closer to the natural world. While staring at their Smartphone. QR Code readers are available for download at the AppStore.*

*Ryan Metke, October 2014*