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REVIEW: ALVARO BARRINGTON AND JOSEPH BEUYS AT GALERIE THADDAEUS ROPAC

by Nina Langford and Vania Barozzi

With a studio feel, the vibe and energy at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac complemented the concurrent exhibitions of Alvaro Barrington's *A Taste of Chocolate* and Joseph Beuys' *Utopia at the Stag Monuments*. Both exhibitions shared the same curator, Norman Rosenthal, who has worked with Beuys on many exhibitions since 1970. Of Alvaro Barrington, Rosenthal says:

"I think Alvaro Barrington is an artist to watch. He is an intense and serious artist who is both of his time but reaches back to artists like Phillip Guston, but there is no doubt that Alvaro connects in his mind and in his work with Joseph Beuys. He is somehow a very Beuysian painter and his work stands out."

Ropac himself says that Beuys' work is incredibly complex and in need of thorough research, and one feels that by placing Barrington's work next door the gallery intends to give the visitors a chance to interact at least with one set of works, seemingly more accessible and open to discussion.

The exhibition of Beuys work features rarely seen sculptures and early works from various stages of the artists life, covering 1947-1985. The connection with Beuys' oeuvre and the *Utopia at the Stag Monuments* exhibition of his works in the adjacent rooms (labelled "the most important UK exhibition of Beuys' work in over a decade") poignantly mark the most recent Ropac deal: representation of Joseph Beuys's Estate worldwide.

Viewing *A Taste of Chocolate*, more than the works themselves, it was interesting to see Barrington's thought process, floating ideas on sticky notes and pieces of paper taped to the walls, which somehow rationalise works that are otherwise still open to interpretation.