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I-S MAGAZINE NO. 456 FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2009
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Scene Stealer Required Reading



Books take center stage in Matthew Bax's first solo show.

Figuratively speaking, Matthew Bax is a multi-hyphenate. The ex-tax accountant turned bar and restaurant owner is known in drinking circles here for his intelligent cocktails at the hip Tippling Club which he co-helms with good friend Ryan Clift. Little do people know that this alcohol alchemist is also deft with the paint brush. For *My Life is an Open Book*—his first solo show here, Bax exhibits his latest series of semi-abstract mixed media paintings, which represent scenes from his personal and professional surroundings using the motif of books. *I-S* chats with the talented Bax ahead of his show.

Why did you choose *My Life Is An Open Book* as the title for your show?

The series reflects on the many hats I wear in my life, different passions all pulling me in different directions. The stacks of unfinished/unread books that litter my studio, office and home, all on different subject matter, form a biography of my life.

How do you choose your source material?

The material or theme usually chooses me. Be it a thought or an idea that builds within me to the point that I have to get it out of my head. Generally I have many series going on in my head at the same time; it just takes discipline and patience to find the time to start working.

What makes this exhibition in Singapore different, artistically and emotionally?

It's the first time I have exhibited this series, some of the images are very new. It's quite a personal show; normally my themes are more removed.

If this show was a cocktail, what would you call it and what ingredients would it be made of?

It would involve many, many ingredients, it would be terribly hard to make and the overall result would be very confusing. This show is about the chaos, confusion and pressure in my life. Different sirens all pulling and luring me in other directions.—Zaki Jufri

***My Life is an Open Book* is on through May 2. FOST Gallery, 65 Kim Yam Rd., 6836-2661.**