

DISPLAY GALLERY

presents

SUNDAY IN THE PARK WITH ED

curated by Cedric Christie & Pascal Rousson

6th – 28th March 2015

Private View 5th March 6-9pm

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Display Gallery is pleased to present *Sunday in the Park with Ed*, curated by Cedric Christie & Pascal Rousson. Taking Édouard Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe* as a starting point, the show asks artists to look at what is transgressive in their own practice, questioning whether the radicalism present in Manet's work has been truly taken forward. The show features over 80 artists, with a focus on painting and European artists. The show also includes a picnic installation where a series of guests have been invited to host evening picnics. Artists include Ackroyd & Harvey, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Jacques Charlier, Simon Liddiment, Robert Montgomery, Martha Parsey, Barry Reigate, Danny Rolph, John Smith, Geraldine Swayne, Gavin Turk, Marijke Vasey & Ben Young.

Ackroyd & Harvey UK/ Wolfgang Aichner DE/ Michael Ashcroft UK/ Scott Ashmore UK/ John Ayscough UK/ Vanya Balogh CRO/ Lorenzo Belanguer ESP/ Alexandre Bianchini CH/ Flora Bowden UK/ Amelia Bowles UK/ Louise Camrass UK/ Jake & Dinos Chapman UK/ Jacques Charlier BEL/ Cedric Christie UK/ Jake Clark UK/ Thomas A Clark & Laurie Clark UK/ Charles Cuccu FR/ Nicholas Curtis UK/ Alicja Dobrucka POL/ Andrea Dojmi IT/ Ronald Dagonnier BEL/ Aisling Drennan EIR/ Saskia Edens CH/ Lucy Evetts UK/ Nicole Farhi UK/ Alex Fox UK/ Fryer, Ritchie, McCail UK/ Paul Gildea UK/ Isabel Haase AT/ Aly Helyer UK/ Hoax & Akarat UK/ Alex Hudson UK/ Mark Jones UK/ Dion Kitson UK/ Labern & Lloyd UK/ Keiron Leach UK/ Simon Liddiment UK/ Lee Maelzer UK/ Derek Mainella CAN/ Philip Marshall UK/ Francisco Da Mata CH,PT/ Helen Maurer UK/ Soren Mayes EIR/ Jeff McMillan UK/ Rebecca Meanley UK/ Tim Mitchell UK/ Tracey Moberly UK/ Elena Montesinos CH/ Robert Montgomery UK/ Sian-Kate Mooney UK/ Loukas Morley UK/ Olivier Mosset CH/ Isolde Nash UK/ Peter Palfi HUN/ Martha Parsey UK/ Toby Rainbird-Webb UK/ Barry Reigate UK/ DJ Roberts UK/ Hedley Roberts UK/ Sylvie Rodriguez CH/ Danny Rolph UK / Greg Rook UK/ Colin J Ross UK/ Otilie Rounce UK/ Pascal Rousson CH,FR/ Daniel Russel-Ahern UK/ Paul Sakoilsky UK/ Edgar Schmitz DE/ Rebecca Scott UK/ Dallas Seitz CAN/ Susan Sluglett UK/ John Smith UK/ John Stephens UK/ Dan Stevens UK/ Robert Suermondt CH,NL,SLO/ Geraldine Swayne UK/ Jennifer Taylor UK/ Nathan Taylor UK/ Tilman DE/ Moi Tran UK,VN/ Paul Tucker UK/ Gavin Turk UK/ Joël Vacheron CH/ Marijke Vasey BEL/ Yi-Ling Wo UK,CN/ Ben Young UK,USA

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According to curator Pascal Rousson “This is an artist show made by practising artists. When Manet exhibited *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* at the Salon des Refusés in 1863, the state was pretty much the only art ‘commanditaire’ (patron) and dictating public taste was a form of aesthetic dictatorship. Manet was to turn things upside down, all would soon drastically change with Impressionism when artists began exhibiting independently from the state. So our idea was to have a ‘salon des indépendants’, as it used to be called, just between artists, to open a discussion through the works and artist talks to ask if something remotely close to the avant garde still existed. It was obvious for us to choose *Le Déjeuner* as a starting point: it’s hard to understand how revolutionary and heretically scandalous it was when it now seems quite harmless. We’re attempting to ask each artist if they think it’s possible to still achieve something equivalent. If not, are we, as in the 1860s, back in an absolute aesthetic dictatorship? **Co-curator Cedric Christie adds:** “It’s that thing that Zola talked about when he was describing contemporary taste: “*They can’t stand strong truths. There is no one to guide the crowd, and what can they do in the great hubbub of contemporary opinions? Art is fragmented ... Each artist has drawn the crowd to himself, flattered it, given it the playthings it loves, gilded and decorated with pink ribbons. Art here has thus become a vast boutique of sweets, with candies for all tastes*”. A ‘vast boutique of sweets’ – I love that. It seemed so familiar, what has changed? We wanted to put it to the test.”

For the figurative painters with a direct relationship to Manet, the question is perhaps more straightforward. Geraldine Swayne explains “I paint ordinary people and sometimes even marginal ones, but this isn’t radical in the hard-left sense of Zola’s journalism or Manet’s experiments but it’s a bit radical in its fundamentalism, i.e. nudging sludge around till it looks like something else. As to transgression or violation of moral boundaries, I don’t care if I do, and don’t think relativism should creep into artists’ choices. Aniconism alone is enough to have had artists be put to death recently, so I will continue to exercise my right, as Manet did, to paint us as we are: laughing, frowning, fucking, praying etc, for as long as I want”. **For Mark Jones it’s personal:** “I still find Manet’s painting radical. If you compare it to the Salon painting of the time it’s mind blowing. Really his work is a natural development from Velasquez or Titian. To transgress I have to overstep some notion of what is expected from a representational painting now. My whole painting practice is based on Manet - his subjects are always in role-play and in some way self-conscious or separate from the life to the point of alienation. I don’t set out to be transgressive, just raw and direct”. **Derek Mainella, the Canadian artist writes:** “I always think of Manet as the last great painter (of representational things) and also the first modern one, with *Le Déjeuner sur l’Herbe* standing as one of the greatest paintings of all time. It’s significance as a key avant-garde moment in art history is not to be denied, however there are also the more contemporary issues of its problematic gaze. My work for this show is co-incidentally subtitled ‘the modern gaze’, as it explores this not dissimilar relationship of modern painting to the society in which it is created. The gaze now shifted to and from phones and computer screens - a new digital reality, which, for better or worse, slowly draws our focus from human interaction and real problems”

That relationship with society, the role of the avant-garde, is something that preoccupies Ackroyd & Harvey, who recently withdrew *Living Skin* from a touring show after questioning and confronting political actions of the sponsor: “Today, funding cuts and austerity measures put corporate sponsorship and individual philanthropy under a spotlight, and throws into shadow often uncomfortable, uncertain, and unexpected issues confronted by the artist. The question is whether the avant-garde is indeed the ‘immediate and fastest way’ to sustained social and environmental reform or a malleable and effective tool for corporate branding and political sanitization?” **Ackroyd & Harvey will also be giving an exhibition talk on the history of this work.**

As for artists dealing with abstraction, Simon Liddiment reckons that “the transgressive in art only exists in pockets – of ignorance and forgetfulness”; **Danny Rolph quotes de Kooning:** “*When I’m falling, I am doing all right. And when I am slipping, I say, ‘Hey this is very interesting’. It is when I am standing upright that bothers me. I’m not doing so good. I’m stiff, you know ... As a matter of fact, I’m really slipping most of the time into the glimpse. That is a wonderful sensation, I realize right now, to slip into this glimpse. I’m like a slipping glimpse*”. **For Ben Young,** “the work I’m exhibiting transgresses the fundamentals of previous work by denying overt narrative - it’s not ‘about’ anything. Any narrative significance there might be resides solely in the choice of materials and build up of the painting’s surface. It takes as its subject my unkempt backyard in Italy - so is it a (square) landscape painting or a non-representational abstraction that borrows its palette from the colours and tones of a snow-covered yard? There’s no clear answer. I almost prefer it to be taken as a three dimensional object that happens to be covered in paint.”

As well as Gavin Turk and Jake & Dinos Chapman, the show includes multi-disciplinary Belgian artist Jacques Charlier (b. 1939), whose project *100 sexes d’artistes* was rejected by the Venice Biennale in 2009. Olivier Mosset (Swiss, b.1944), known for his monochrome works and influence on the Neo-Geo painters of the 80s and the avant garde filmmaker John Smith. Artists also include Robert Montgomery exhibiting one of his poetic billboard pieces, Barry Reigate maker of ‘pop porn’ works, and Martha Parsey and Marijke Vasey who are both showing paintings dealing with the question of the representation of the female image.

Rousson, who is Swiss French, concludes: “Mostly we selected fellow artists with whom we’ve done collaborative work, exhibited, or talked to during studio visits and exhibitions. They came from lots of creative backgrounds and seemed to be able to make an interesting comment about the topic of the avant garde today - its legacy seems a major concern, with large amounts of work dealing with art references, nostalgia, etc. Many appear to ask if we have reached a dead end? What can still be done? We don’t really know what we’re finally going to end up with in terms of questions or answers expressed by the works. During our install week, we’ll try to make sense of it all, a bit like experimenting in your studio. Let’s wait and see.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

front image - *Marijke Vasey: 'Spam', 2015, oil on panel, 50 x 40 cm*

Display Gallery is a contemporary art gallery located in Holborn. The gallery is a platform for multidisciplinary collaborations and hosts monthly group and solo shows. The exhibition schedule at Display Gallery focuses on promoting artists that create highly executed works in a variety of media.

Ackroyd & Harvey - sculpture, photography, architecture, ecology and biology are some of the disciplines that intersect in Ackroyd & Harvey's work, revealing an intrinsic bias towards process and event. For over 25 years their work has been exhibited in contemporary art galleries, museums and public spaces worldwide.

Jacques Charlier (b. 1939, Liège) is an autodidact. His oeuvre is defined by his critical approach to the art world, the art market and the current clichés regarding the avant-garde. Owing to his constant quest for appropriate connections between ideas and media, he favours an interdisciplinary way of working, adhering closely to the means of expression used in different styles and epochs.

Cedric Christie (b.1962) makes work that is a critical appraisal of colour and modernism. His artworks, noted for their use of industrial materials and the commercial fabrication process, have appeared in a string of international solo shows and public art commissions. *When Colour Becomes a Beautiful Object. And An Object Becomes a Beautiful Colour* opens at Flowers Gallery in April 2015.

Mark Jones lives and works in London. He studied painting at Central Saint Martins College of Art. Solo Exhibitions include Westminster Art Reference Library, Carter Presents, Blue Gallery & 30 Underwood Street (all in London) & Millefiori Art Space, Athens. He has participated in various group exhibitions including Lion and Lamb Gallery and Frissiras Museum, Athens.

Derek Mainella (b. 1973, Toronto) is known mainly for his oil paintings, while maintaining a constantly evolving relationship to format in his practice. Working mostly in series, Mainella sustains an exploratory relationship to format, process, critical issues and historical reference in painting. He has had several solo exhibitions in Toronto and shows internationally. He lives and works in London.

Robert Montgomery (b. 1972, Scotland) studied at Edinburgh College of Art & the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Poetic texts are at the basis of his work. He makes billboard pieces, light pieces (recycled sunlight poems), woodcuts & watercolours. He showed in *Oriente**, 2011 Venice Biennale, and was the British artist selected for the first biennale in India, 2012.

Simon Liddiment (b. 1964, Great Yarmouth) studied at Great Yarmouth School of Art & Design and Goldsmiths College, London. Forthcoming exhibitions include *We are not your Native Informers* at Gallery 1X1, in Dubai, and *Art Brussels 2015* with Galerie Valérie Bach.

Martha Parsey (b. 1973) is a painter & filmmaker who studied at UAL, Universität der Künste & the German Film & Television Academy, Berlin. Her films on Francis Bacon have been screened at the ICA & Hayward, Centre Pompidou, & Haus der Kunst. Shortlisted for the Lexmark European Art & Sovereign European Art prizes, her paintings are exhibited internationally & are in a number of prestigious collections.

Barry Reigate (b. 1971, London) studied at Camberwell College of Arts & Goldsmiths. His work has been described as 'pop porn', using debased sexual cartoon ephemera to provide a critical allegory for art historical attitudes as well as current cultural zeitgeist. He has had solo shows at Nang Gallery, Paradise Row, Trolley Gallery & exhibited at Tate & Saatchi Galleries.

Danny Rolph (b. 1967) has an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art. Recent solo exhibitions include *Paradiso* at Barbara Davis Gallery, Houston 2014. His work is represented in many collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC. He is represented by Barbara Davis gallery, Houston and 532 Gallery, New York.

Pascal Rousson (b. 1963, Lyons) is a French/Swiss artist currently working and living in London. Recent shows include *Fall Rise*, Egal Gallery Berlin; *Very Ape*, Vegas Gallery London; *MMXII Show*, Basel and he has curated *I am by birth a Genevese*, Forde Gallery Geneva and *The Things of Life*, Flowers Gallery London.

John Smith (b.1952, Walthamstow) is a London based artist who works mainly with film and video. His work has been widely shown internationally for nearly 40 years and is known for its formal and linguistic play. His films are held in numerous collections including Tate and Arts Council England.

Geraldine Swayne (b. 1965) studied Fine Art at Newcastle University from 1985–89. She has been exhibited in numerous group and solo shows. In 2010 she was a finalist in the John Moores painting prize, Walker Gallery, Liverpool, and in 2014 she had her first Museum show in *We're Still Here* at Magasin6 in Stockholm.

Marijke Vasey (b. Belgium) completed a BA (Hons) in Fine Art Painting at Wimbledon School of Art, graduating in 1999. She is a current MFA Student at Goldsmiths College. In 2014 her work was selected for the Threadneedle Prize exhibition.

Ben Young (b.1973) is a British born Anglo-American painter. He completed his Masters in Fine Art at St Martins in 2007 and has exhibited his work internationally in over thirty group shows and art fairs and in four one-man shows. He lives and works in Umbria, Italy and London.

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