

Glenn Brown
Simon Callery
Louise Hopkins
Chris Ofili
James Rielly
Dominic Shepherd
Catrin Webster
Richard Wright

Pure Fantasy

Inventive Painting of the 90s

A recurring conversation

There is a feeling that we are living in a time when everything appears to be coming to an end, dying or entering a period of dissolution. One hundred and sixty years have elapsed since the invention of photography appeared to signal the end of the importance of painting. New ideas and contributions to the activity have quietly continued over the past years and painting survives still as a valid form of expression, whilst the merit of the process has been questioned repeatedly by artists and academics.

In the late 20th Century particularly in the light of new media and technology, it is not surprising that painting continues to be considered outmoded as a professional activity and irrelevant as a medium with nothing new to say. Despite this ongoing discussion, painters emerge with new energy to vitalise the practical and intellectual processes of painting, and, more importantly, collectors – Saatchi et al – are still buying work and contributing to the ongoing survival of painting.

The eight artists in this exhibition *Pure Fantasy: Inventive Painting of the 90s* can only give a taste of current painting. For example, in a time when other artwork appears to be more spectacular, for a painting to sustain itself in the context of the sometimes moving experience of large scale video projection or gallery installation, is tricky. The artists in *Pure Fantasy* are only a few examples of how it is still possible to make a valid form of painting by understanding its history, its supports, pigments, materials and suspensions.

Artists today often use the *painterly* as effect –



Glenn Brown

"You take my place in the showdown"
1993 "After The Great Masturbator" 1929
by Salvador Dali. By kind permission of
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© Glenn Brown 1993.
oil on canvas 215.5 x 323 cm
Jointly owned by Richard Salmon, London and
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drawing on the legacy of 60s minimalism when painting processes were explored and eventually became the subject of the painting. This is the very opposite of the *hard-won* image, the choice of human passion. For these artists the idea is as important as the final result.

A move away from abstraction, a concentration on ideas and a return to figuration brings with it a new hedonism where painting can again be thought of as pleasure. But it is now necessary for artists to almost paint in an *awareness* that it quite simply *won't do* to paint, to almost paint the disintegration of painting. The German artists Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke are prime

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Glenn Brown could be called the ultimate postmodernist. Working from a facsimile of an original, well known painting, he will exploit the chance elements of colour variance through reproduction and mimic painstakingly the virtuosity and gesture of original painterly marks, but retain a complete flatness of surface which denies his hand and keeps faithful to the reproduction rather than the original painting. Working with very fine brushes and paint thinned with linseed oil, he will subtly alter the composition of the original image, finally eliminating all trace of his own hand by lightly brushing the surface with a dry brush. 'Dali's paintings are terrible, tacky, vulgar, gruesome, full of adolescent self-loathing. That's why I like them!



Gellid galw Glenn Brown yn Bostfodernydd i'r eirhaf. Gan weithio ar facsimile o baentiad enwog gwreiddiol, bydd yn defnyddio hap-elfennau amrywiadau mewn llw trwy atgynhyrchu a dynwared yn ofalus rinwedd ac ystum marciau paent y gwreiddiol, ond bydd hefyd yn cadw'r arwyneb yn hollol wastad fel nad oes ôl ei law arno a bydd yn glynu'n ffyddlon wrth yr atgynhyrchiad yn hytrach na'r paentiad gwreiddiol. Gan weithio gyda brwsys mân iawn, a phaent sydd wedi'i deneuo ag olew had llin, bydd yn newid cyfansoddiad y ddelwedd wreiddiol mewn ffordd gryno iawn, gan gael gwared â phob ôl o'i law ei hun trwy frasio dros y wyneb yn ysgafn gyda brws sych. "Mae paentiadau Dali yn ofniadwy, yn gomom, yn aflednais, yn erchyll, yn llawn hunan-gasineb glaslencyndod. Dy

Biography

1966 Born in Hexham, Northumberland. **1984-85** Norwich School of Art, Norwich. **1985-88** Bath Academy of Art, Bath. **1990-92** Goldsmiths College, London. Lives and works in London.

Solo Exhibitions

1995 Karsten Schubert, London.
1996 Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Hexham.

Chris Ofili

'Pop Corn Shells' 1995 mixed media on linen and two dung supports 199 x 122.4 cm
Arts Council Collection, Hayward Gallery, London

(Illustrated below)
'Two Doo Voodoo' 1997 mixed media on canvas and two dung supports 8' x 6'

Collection: Southampton City Art Gallery



In Chris Ofili's paintings there is a fragmentation or dislocation of reality. Ofili combines a delicate tracery of painted marks which support collaged elements in an almost hallucinatory, bittersweet celebration of black consciousness. The addition of architectural elements in the form of elephant dung (a material first used by the American artist David Hammons) to support and display the painting both subverts the beauty (and pleasure of the image) and simultaneously refers to cultural identity.

Yn mhaentiadau Chris Ofili, bydd realaeth yn cael ei ddarnio neu ei ddatgymalu. Mae Ofili'n defnyddio gwead ysgafn o farciau paent yn gefn i elfennau collage gan ddathlu ei ymwybyddiaeth ddu mewn ffordd sydd bron yn rhithweledol ac yn chwewu-felys. Mae ychwanegu elfennau pensaernsfol ar ffurf dom eliffant (deunydd a ddefnyddiwyd gyntaf gan yr artist Americanaidd, David Hammons) i gynnal ac arddangos y paentiad ar y naill law yn gwyrddio harddwch (a phleser y ddelwedd) ac ar yr pryd yn cyfeirio at hunaniaeth ddiwyllianol.

Biography

1968 Born Manchester.
1987-88 Thameside College of Technology. **1988-91** Chelsea School of Art, London. **1991-93** Royal College of Art, London.

Solo Exhibitions

1996 Victoria Miro Gallery, London
1995 Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York. **1991** 'Paintings and Drawings' Kepler Gallery London.