

HAYHILLGALLERY

MASTER WORKS AND CONTEMPORARY ART

35 Baker Street, London W1U 8EN

PRESS RELEASE



Oliver Estavillo: *Comedie Humaine*

3rd February to 1st March 2014

Hay Hill Gallery is proud to present the work of Oliver Estavillo this February. Like visiting Ripley's Believe it or Not, Estavillo's oils are circuses of weird and wonderful creatures. Ladies with budgerigar heads and droopy hats wear their pearls high to disguise crepey necks and sagging jowels. They gaze out of colourless eyes under dusty chandeliers and bare bulbs. These operatic gatherings are peopled with muscle men with squared hair and tanned torsos, sinewy women in tight cocktail dresses, tentacle-headed lurkers and emperors in need of new clothes.

The intricately sketched lines are etchings, inked with vivid pools of enamel. Every possible crease and fold is highlighted as though these people were deflating behind the settee like old balloons forgotten after a party. A Mexican Day of the Dead with zombies and skeletal figures cavorting around the captured Ringmaster and purple-suit-wearing gorilla. As if that wasn't enough, we have to contend with a roaring hippo and a screaming pig, not to mention the fact that the place is on fire while it rains cash.

These are places where the meat-mottled women drink wine and fanged stags brawl under neatly mounted taxidermy testicles. Pink and blue Care Bears are faceless, mauled gently by the Sunglass-sporting Death. Another nightmarish nursery rhyme depicts several zombie-Gretels, little mouths full of needle-sharp teeth and terrifying claws wrapped around the lifeless Hansel. The raw sexuality and animalistic debauchery makes these much more of an Angela Carter take on your average fairytale.

Estavillo's work reminds us of the transient nature of life, and that the material world is meaningless. Unlike many moralistic paintings where the sensuality of the painting undermines the main message of aesthetic futility, these works are disturbing and explicitly morbid. An artistic expression of our everyday fears about dying, these are depictions of trashy flashy pleasure islands and their grotesque party guests. Puce-faced devils, confetti and baboon-clowns demonstrate madness, vulgarity and unlimited greed. This ultra-violent fantasism scratches beneath the glittering surface to expose decay, confronting us with our own selfish bloodlust.

From Holbein to Bernt Notke, the certainty of death has been explored throughout history, particularly the 'Danse Macabre', 'Dance of Death' or 'Totentanz'. Each mortal holds hands with a spectre or extremely decayed body; they are led mercilessly through the steps despite their protesting. Only Death is the ultimate equaliser- '*ob am, obreich, im Tode gleich*'- Whether rich or poor, equal in death.

Ends

Oliver Estavillo was born in Germany, 1964 as son of an American soldier and a German mother in Fulda / Germany. As a self-taught artist he has been exclusively freelance since 2006, exhibiting in Munich, Cologne, Berlin, and Fulda. From 1986 he lived and worked in Munich, and since 2006 he has now worked exclusively as a freelance artist.

The artist's paintings have found many enthusiastic admirers and buyers at his many exhibitions in Munich, Cologne, Berlin, Madrid and in his exhibition "Shark-Society" at Vonderau Museum in Fulda.

Notes to Editors: Hay Hill Gallery, located on Baker Street, represents a number of internationally recognised contemporary artists. *Comedie Humaine* will be held alongside an exhibition by Peter Blum and a sculpture collection which features works by Eleanor Cardozo, Richard Minns, Palolo Valdes, Andy Cheese, Ian Edwards and Nicola Godden.

**For press information and images please contact Sarah Jones,
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Opening hours: Monday – Friday 10.30-6, Saturday 11-5

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