

Ged Quinn

28 April - 1 June 2011

Private View Thursday 28 April 2011, 6-8pm



Stephen Friedman Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of new work by British artist Ged Quinn. This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery and follows his much lauded inclusion in '*Newspeak: British Art Now*' at the Saatchi Gallery in 2010.

Quinn's richly layered paintings combine striking landscapes with fragments of figurative narrative from the breadth of history, myth and ironic imagination. The works are awe-inspiring in their combination of painterly skills and provocative conceptual intent. Here, sublime backgrounds meet broken-down foregrounds - at all turns death, deceit and decay are dragged into the frame of an imagined lived experience. The stunning, transcendental vistas which set this dichotomic milieu are inspired by the Baroque, Romantic and Classicist traditions, as encapsulated by artists such as Claude Lorrain and the Hudson River School group. This mimesis of the Old Master aesthetic

creates a powerful tension within the works, an identification and association with a real and mythologised past that is constantly slipping. In a chronologically impossible setting the past is a destination that is rife with impossibilities. The immediacy and distance of place and time is always shifting in a denial of assimilation and deflection of certainty. This very particular identification with the source work questions the comfort of its enduring legacy and highlights its very own deceptions.

Presented in this exhibition are new, large-scale paintings and portraits. Sun infused skies shower light on dense forestland and rolling hills in vibrantly coloured pictorial tableaux. In the foreground of each work, intricate scenes are played out, gesturing towards an array of historical, cultural and philosophical references. Decrepit wooden shacks and crumbling brick towers stand in stark contrast to their opulent surroundings. In one scene, a Titian-esque Cupid leans forward on one leg, extending a single rose towards a Modernist architectural structure. A short distance away a stone alcove sits atop a grassy knoll in which Naum Gabo's *Constructed Head No.2* appears to rest. Early 20th century Constructivism and its distinct strand of utopianism comes head to head here with one of its own artistic predecessors: the Arcadian ideal of the unspoiled and the harmonious. Each movement posits an unerring belief in the validity of its own endeavours.

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In Quinn's dreamlike world, this unerring confidence is brought into sharp refute; timescales are collapsed and linear narratives questioned. Ideas of parody and simulation are given such a complicated context that immediate readings and interpretations are denied through the seductive mix of hope and despair, philosophical and popular uncertainties.

The subtle, teasing and at times unnerving nature of the juxtapositions at play in Quinn's work situate him as one of the foremost painters working today. This eagerly anticipated exhibition continues the artist's exploration into the contradictions and anomalies that run rife across our cultural landscape in this highly accomplished new body of work.

Ged Quinn (b. 1963 in Liverpool, UK) lives and works in Cornwall. UK notable past solo exhibitions include *Somebody's Coming That Hates Us*, Wilkinson Gallery, London (2010); *The Heavenly Machine*, Spike Island, Bristol (2005); and *Utopia Dystopia*, Tate St. Ives (2004). Notable past group exhibitions include *The Witching Hour*, Water Hall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Leverkusen (2010); *Lust for Life & Dance of Death*, Kunsthalle Krems (2010); *Newspeak: British Art Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2010) and State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (2009); *Made Up*, Liverpool Biennale, Tate Liverpool (2008); *Collezione 2*, Biennale of Southern Italy, Bari, Puglia (2006); and *The Real Ideal*, Millenium Galleries, Sheffield (2005).

Quinn is also the subject of a forthcoming monograph published by Stephen Friedman Gallery.

Gallery hours are: Tuesday to Friday, 10am - 6pm and Saturday, 11am - 5pm
For further details please contact Alice Walters on +44 (0)20 7494 1434