

Patrick Painter Inc. is proud to present their first solo exhibition of Peter Saul at Bergamot Station. Featured right on the heels of Saul's retrospective at the Orange County Museum of Art, this exhibition serves as a perfect "cherry on top" for the Southern California contemporary art aficionado. As the title of the show suggests, five brand new works from Mr. Saul will be on display, each featuring his usual cast of twisted and amorphous characters; monsters of a post-modern era.

Since his career first blossomed over fifty years ago, Saul's artwork continues to engage with both the taboo and the sacred. Everything from sexuality to torture, from the sanctity of art to the horrors of conquest, Saul's psychedelic palette explores them all. The new works presented in this show are no exception. This show highlights Saul's interpretation of the monstrosities of mankind, the anxiety of the everyday as well as the freaky fetishes of American culture.

Saul's timing and topicality are perfect and of the moment. For example, the portrait Real Estate Agent Going Crazy depicts an agent's head morphing into a house. Brilliant spouts of volcanic fire erupt out of chimney-orphuses, eyes pop cartoonishly, and the remaining features ooze down into the agent's collar as he witnesses the collapse of the American real estate market.

Also featured in this show are two of Saul's history paintings. These takes on historical events are another favorite subject for Saul, with previous works ranging from the Vietnam war to Columbus' discovery of America. Featured in this show is Fort Defiance, which depicts a frontier battle between the fortified, hot pink-skinned American cavalry and a slew of nearly-naked female natives armed with bows and arrows. Though their arrows penetrate the cavalymen's bodies, the eventual outcome remains clear in the viewer's mind: the perpetual westward expansion of the United States and the cross-continental destruction of indigenous people. Saul's rendering of this scene makes it clear that the indigenous women's flimsy arrows will not keep the cavalry at bay for long, and hint at what is to come.

Taking on a slightly lighter topic, Bad Restaurant brilliantly portrays the horrors of eating in a restaurant with a "B" health rating, or the even more frightening and forbidden "C". In a culture obsessed with fresh and organic foods, Saul presents every American's worst nightmare: germs. Insects and personified bacteria battle it out in front of a tumultuous background. Saul includes himself in this chaotic scene with several self-portraits that float throughout the composition, in ghastly shades of green, purple, pink and blue. In this piece, Saul allows us to glimpse inside the world of an upset stomach.

“These pictures are supposed to appeal to the viewer directly, as something fresh to look at, without the help of explanation by critics; curators,” Saul says, “I never bother to separate the true from the false. If anything’s there, it’s because it seemed interesting. The idea is to find something low, like commonplace, cheap, crazy or funny and raise it up to great heights by caressing it with beautiful technique”.

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