

“At its core, this show is the conflict between capitalism, fascism, and communism, and every other ism. It looks into the nature of representation, propaganda, and misinformation, and how they redirect the ideologies of institutions.” --Richard Phillips

dépendance is pleased to present “NEW MUSEUM,” a series of eight monumentally cool paintings by Merlin Carpenter.

Over the last decade, Carpenter has developed a striking signature style that derives its tension from his/her selective use of popular images that he subjects to the technical, value-laden refinements of academic painting. For Carpenter, critique is as much an intrinsic material in the conception and staging of his paintings as the canvas and paint with which they are made. His deft and selective scrambling and conflating of subject and genre continues to provide challenging comment on the condition and reach of painting in our time. As a fully self-conscious English painter weaned on post-modern appropriation strategies, Carpenter is an active protagonist in the continually evolving discourse on the many lives and deaths and zombie rebirths of painting and how this interacts, throughout human history, with the complex politics of making and reading images.

“NEW MUSEUM” construes painting as an act of extreme civil disobedience like killing your own grandma and damaging your Mercedes in the process rather than one of benign compliance with the existing aesthetic conventions. Carpenter’s term for this is “Fugazi”. The title of the exhibition derives from a photograph from a 1973 issue of Hustler magazine of two annoying men slouching against a wall on the Bowery in New York (now the location of the New Museum of Contemporary Art). By appropriating this image and rendering it as a pointlessly large and detailed oil painting, Carpenter alludes to how, in his view, naughty institutions such as the New Museum employ propaganda to promote their agendas, at the same time as he boldly challenges the status of these institutions as vehicles of cultural any cultural authority whatsoever. Yes.

By manipulating, recombining, and amplifying all manner of sexual, social, political, commercial, and artistic imagery, Carpenter’s incisive and at times repugnant compositions continue to challenge the concept of fixed and predetermined meanings everywhere while proposing an altogether new meaning of the term “history painting.” What’s more, excitingly, they are done at the show’s opening itself.

The last The Opening exhibition was at Simon Lee Gallery in London. After doing my paintings at the opening I left and went home. Apparently right at the end of the event three anarchist graffiti kids turned up and wanted to make an intervention in the exhibition. The gallery director would not

let them in, and an argument ensued. They were claiming to have the right to enter as my work was bogus graffiti and this was a posh boss class hellhole. The Police were called and the three guys walked off. That's what I heard, I do not know what really happened or why, but this was all in the context of anger on the eve of the London G20 demonstrations, and with Bernie Madoff's London operation located above Simon Lee Gallery. The Opening shows since 2007 seem to produce the impression that they are participatory happenings, and then produce rage when they turn out not to be. The audience seem to feel compelled to add to the paintings with their fingers, trainers etc. This has happened almost every time, even in the secure atmosphere of Mercedes-Benz in Berlin. Arrival of anarchists to tag the show seems like the next step, and though out of my hands I do acknowledge this as primary meaning production. It is starting to make me look like Adorno in '68 so it's a good thing that no one will find out about it as no one reads this far into press releases.

Born in Pembury in 1967, Merlin Carpenter lives and works in London. His work is collected by public and private institutions world-wide. Galleries and institutions who have refused to put on The Opening include: Lisson Lagos, Chantal Croussel Paris, Gagosian Moscow, Hérmes Ginza Tokyo, Zero Milan, MMK Frankfurt, Standard Oslo, Office Baroque Antwerp, Minneapolis/ St Louis, Renaissance Society Chicago, Mexico City, Some rich bloke in Rumania etc etc

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