

Praz-Delavallade Gallery is glad to announce its first show to be devoted to the American artist PETER SAUL.

Born in San Francisco in 1934, PETER SAUL is recognized as a major contemporary art figure. His unanimously hailed Orange County Museum show in 2006 highlighted this anomalous figure and the discovery of a uniquely original and far reaching work.

Although integrated at first into the pop Art Movement, PETER SAUL soon distanced himself in order to develop his own language made up of bad jokes and disrespectful references. Counter culture, black humor, outrageous excess and questionable taste : such are this « American nasty kid » 's favorite tools.

In the course of the past forty-five years, he has revisited in his own idiosyncratic way, the great works of art history and developed his entirely own vision of History. A radical vision, indeed, which, far from aggrandizing, proposes instead a new take as seen through the prism of popular contemporary culture.

PETER SAUL returns history to its primitive reality, which he sees as a mix of romance and terror. The stories he tells, sometimes perhaps in a salacious mode, are based on historical events, art history or yet mythology. They serve as a foil to point out the greed, arrogance, perversity, bulimia, laziness and aggressivity of a vainglorious and often despised America.

His chaotic compositions borrow certain of classical painting's principles : for instance, he draws directly on the canvas, then fills in the backgrounds, places supporting objects in order to finally, emphasize the main subject.

Primary colors, disregard of perspective turn these images into cosmic strip vignettes. When addressing the masterpieces of art history, he turns them into caricatures. In fact he kidnaps the image through a parody of art criticism in general.

Saul was able to develop a style wholly dedicated to the reversal of every idealistic utopia with his comic strip in a grand manner, which is his own way of highlighting the ambivalent aspects of a certain American culture, the culture of perverted dialectics of the good and the bad. He might be there the artist who proved to be our times' best illustrator, the one who documented best the fall of the American Empire. »

Numerous one man shows have been devoted to the work of PETER SAUL in the US and Europe. His works are found in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Whitney Museum, New York, the Pompidou Center, Paris, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art, Dallas, the Art Institute, Chicago, the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburg, among others.

*\* Michael Duncan, The Spectacular Wrath of Saul, Peter Saul's history paintings, catalogue Peter Saul Orange County Museum of art Hatje Cantz 2008*

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