



Nicholas Jolly - Solo Exhibition

Sarah Myerscough Fine Art

15th April - 8th May, 2010



Sarah Myerscough Fine Art is pleased to announce the long-overdue return to the London art scene of Nicholas Jolly. This will be his first solo London exhibition since 1996.

A graduate of the Royal Academy Schools, Jolly gained an early reputation in the 1980s and 90s with dark, brooding paintings that might be stylistically associated with the robust figuration that was merging from Germany and Scotland at the time. Since then his fierce imagination and mastery of colour and form has led to his work being acquired by public institutions such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and Osaka Contemporary Art and Culture Centre, not to mention a plethora of private collectors. He has also won numerous awards including two Pollock-Krasner Foundation grants (1995 and 2009) and a Susan Kasen Summer Scholarship (1994).

Although he has never ceased painting entirely, for the first five years of the new millennium Jolly's creative energies were largely channeled into co-founding a satirical gentleman's quarterly, *The Chap* magazine, reinventing himself as an alter-ego Vic Darkwood, self-proclaimed 'anarcho-dandy'.

The themes and photomontage-based imagery of Nicholas Jolly's current paintings are clearly influenced by his magazine work, but also has a lineage that can be traced back through the techniques and concerns of Pop Art and Surrealism. Taking idealised images of post-war British citizens, gleaned from 1950s' copies of *Picture Post* and other vintage magazines, Jolly creates images that question a naïve faith in the perfectibility of the future. Scenes of suburban bliss and utopian housing projects are turned on their heads by the introduction of dissonant pictorial elements. In *Premonition of a Plague*, what appears at first sight to be monstrous viral spores looming over the city, in a scene reminiscent of 1950s Science Fiction, turn out to be relatively innocuous pollen particles as seen under an electron microscope. This disconnection between perceived threat and mundane reality mocks our risk averse age and the constant warnings of imminent threat that can be used as a form of social control. However, if at any stage this critique of modern life looks like becoming oppressive or macabre, Jolly immediately off-sets this with playfulness and humour, and an uplifting palette that contrasts monochromes against a vibrant use of colour.



Top Image: A Message From Our Leader, 2008. Oil on Canvas, 254 x 173 cm

Bottom Image: Premonition of a Plague, 2010. Oil on Canvas, 193 x 163 cm



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