

Media Release
-For Immediate Distribution-
UPCOMING EXHIBITION OF NEW WORKS BY
WILLIAM BALTHAZAR ROSE
S&D GALLERY
15 Thackeray Street, Kensington

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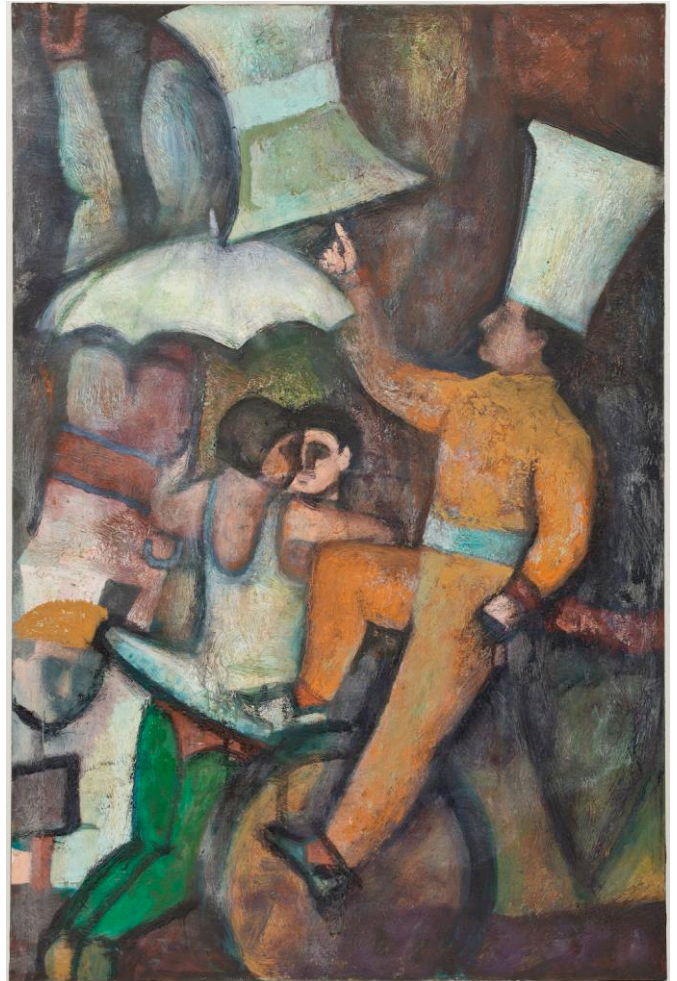
Barbara Djebali, S&D Gallery 15 Thackeray St.
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“Rose has in fact achieved something far more impressive than the Hirsts and Emin’s by demonstrating that something genuinely new can still be created within the traditional idiom of picture-making.” - Prof. Edward Chaney

“It is in this gap and the strange, almost impossible, conversation between Piero della Francesca and Franz Kafka that the work of William Rose resonates.” -Prof. Sean Gaston

“At times Rose conjures late Sickert, Beckmann, Balthus, Morandi, Manet, and Cezanne, variously inimitable and idiosyncratic painters who provide an oblique benchmark for Rose’s inherent individualism and privileged position on a post-modern pluralist parapet.” -Peter Davies

Twenty new works by William Balthazar Rose will be exhibited at the seductively chic S&D Gallery newly opened by Barbara Djebali. The **exhibition is entitled ‘The Painter-Cook and Friends’ and begins September 10th** at 15 Thackeray Street, Kensington, W8 5ET.



Balancing Act

2013

Raised in a family of painters and intellectuals, William Balthazar Rose was born in 1961 in Cambridge. He studied in the USA, at the University of California and Princeton where he graduated in Art and in Architecture successively. He gave up a lucrative career as an architect to follow a more poetic journey as a painter, dividing his time between studios in England and Italy.

Rose’s work is collected by such celebrities as Michel Roux, Jr. and American artist Wayne Thiebaud, and has been appreciated greatly by public and critics alike. His painting is hermetic, the forms are simple and indefinite; notable is the influence he has received from artists such as Piero della Francesca, Ottone Rosai and Giorgio Morandi in painting, and Federico Fellini and Pier Paolo Pasolini in cinema.

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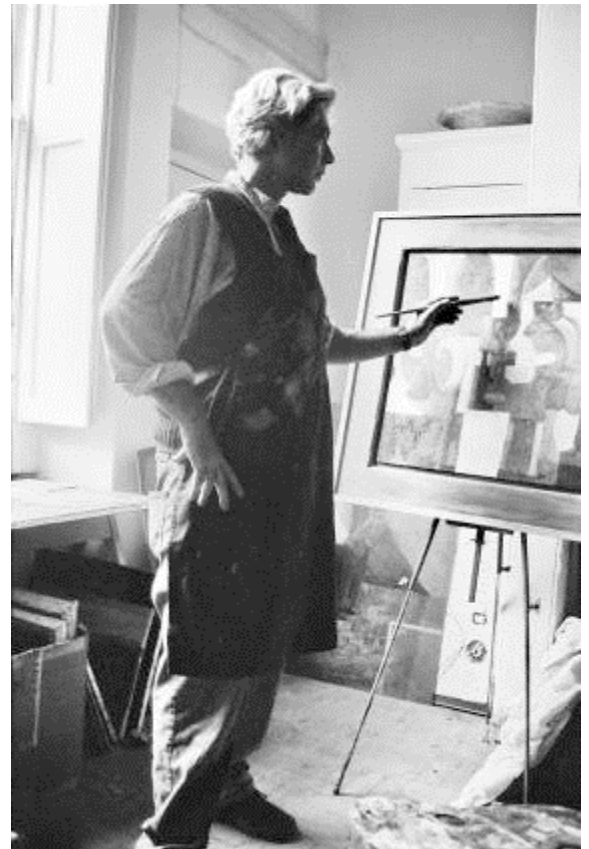
Excerpts: Critical Responses to the Art of William Balthazar Rose

Excerpt from ‘Tradition and Individual Talent’ by Edward Chaney

“Rose . . . has forged his own style which is now as recognizable as the style of any great master. What might at first strike one as a mannerism becomes something one cannot quite imagine being any other way. Even the hats, quasi-comical but quasi-pharaonic or Chinese or Balthusian have an inevitability about them. A melancholy that is not, however, depressing pervades the whole surface of the canvas or board. Timeless questions hanging in the air; something is about to be enacted but never quite carried out. The figures and faces have interesting surfaces but are depicted without much detail, leaving the viewer to fill in the missing visual and thus conceptual account. . . In many of the pictures some sort of interrogation is going on, reminding one of Kafka’s notion that we are always ‘before the law’ (‘vor dem Gestez’).”

“For it is indeed among these artists and those successors who worked into the middle of the twentieth century that one finds the most relevant context in which to discuss the work of William Rose, whose his artistic forebears include not merely the internationally-recognized Giorgio de Chirico, Carra and Morandi but the slightly later and less widely known Felice Casorati, Mario Sironi, Ottone Rosai and Massimo Campigli.¹ These last provided some of the ingredients that Rose has absorbed whilst developing his own very distinctive style, a style that has thus evolved outside the safer area of his native aesthetic environment. This makes him something of an acquired taste where Anglo-Saxony is concerned.”

“Hirst’s recent attempts to lend his oeuvre an air of ancient authority (as in his diamond skull or golden calf) fails to rival the integrity evident in any part of one of Rose’s pictures. The quality of his paint surfaces makes Rose one of those artists of whom it really can be said that it is essential to see the pictures themselves rather than any form of reproduction. . . Rego proceeds along the more vivid, narrative style suggested by Balthus, Rose seems to have followed the more meditative path.”



Edward Chaney is Professor of Fine and Decorative Arts at Southampton Solent University. He has published A Traveller’s Companion to Florence, The Evolution of the Grand Tour, The Evolution of English Collecting, Richard Eurich: 1903-1992: Visionary Artist and Inigo Jones’s ‘Roman Sketchbook’.

Excerpt from ‘The Mysterious Iconography of William Balthazar Rose’ by Peter Davies

“Rose is a knowing and self-critical artist, widely travelled and well informed. His subject-matter is familiar yet disarmingly elusive and enigmatic”

“Typically the paint is lush, the colour rich and multivarious and the forms robust—not unlike Brangwyn and Sickert from the past or Stephen Conroy, Bill Jacklin and Chris LeBrun from the present. The forms become ciphers for stylistic paraphrase or experiment—groups of musicians, cooks or street congregations flattened into compounded cubist silhouettes or subverted into disquieting de Chiricoesque juxtapositions.”

“Utilising familiar and everyday material Rose presents mysterious scenarios that, courtesy of an almost fortuitous post-modern pluralist mix, touch on surrealism, metaphysical painting, realism, and symbolism. The pictures do not buy into the ephemeral mini-trends of post-pop, post-feminist, new image work but rather draw inspiration from the past in order to make sense of the present.”

“At times Rose conjures late Sickert, Beckmann, Balthus, Morandi, Manet, and Cezanne, variously inimitable and idiosyncratic painters who provide an oblique benchmark for Rose’s inherent individualism and privileged position on a post-modern pluralist parapet.”



Whose Dream is This?

Excerpt from “William Balthazar Rose” catalogue introduction, Brian Sinfield, Gallery Director

“William Balthazar Rose’s vision culminates in work of remarkable creative power. His extraordinary symbolic figurative paintings are not only striking at first encounter, but also deeply thought provoking. They have the ability to disturb, and at the same time, to make one smile.”

Excerpts from *William Rose: Images from Bath and Italy* by Jon Bennington, Curator of the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, England

“He reserves his most passionate admiration for painters of the past such as Piero della Francesca, Chardin, Corot, Cézanne and Morandi. He has even followed the Piero trail to the extent of settling in the town of the artist’s birth, Sansepolcro, thereby subjecting himself to many of the same sensory stimuli as the Renaissance master...”

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“Merely describing the painter’s methodology, however, will not enlighten the viewer as to the meaning of these works. What are they about? We will all take away something different, and that is only right and proper, but the lasting impression for me is one of a serene and fragile arcadia, an earthly foretaste of a better place. Human protagonists, when they appear, are subservient to this sense of a higher order – apparent in their linear geometry –, albeit seasoned with a wry sense of humour.”

Excerpt from *Transfigurazione e Tradizione* by Sean Gaston

“It is in this gap and the strange, almost impossible, conversation between Piero della Francesca and Franz Kafka that the work of William Rose resonates. . . . For Rose, the painter is a cook. He paints and dwells in the old Platonic battlefield of the artist as artisan and as an imitator, a mimic of the truth. The painter cooks and mixes artifice (technique, skill, technology, *tekhne*) with imitation (representation, illusion, confusion, *mimesis*) and threatens nature (*phusis*) itself. He cooks *and* he is cooked: taken away from the very thing that he reaches for, without rest. The painter as cook can *never* choose between Arcadia and Gregor Samsa, between transfiguration and tradition.“

Dr Sean Gaston is author of numerous books including Starting with Derrida, Derrida and Disinterest, Derrida, Literature and War, and Reading of Derrida’s of Grammatology. He is a member of Brunel College, London, and has also written numerous essays amongst which Gregor Samsa in Arcadia: The Paintings of William Rose features. The essay was published in Italian in the catalogue “Sinfonia di Cappelli” under the title Transfigurazione e Tradizione (Transfiguration and Tradition).

Excerpts from *L’Universo Gemino* by Paolo Turcis:

“William Balthazar Rose’s painting is based on different artistic traditions, the result of an unlimited figurative culture. From the genial cubist revolution to the lessons of the metaphysical, from the rarefied atmospheres of Morandi’s still lives, to the harmonies of Renaissance art, the most intense artistic experiences of the past centuries are revived in these paintings full of visual charm. An extraordinary chromatic ability together with refined technical skills make up the artist’s highly remarkable style. A sensitive man, Rose is polyedric and eccentric, inclined by nature to an intimate study of reality, made up of pauses and silence.”

“A thick haze obscures the backgrounds of certain disquieting paintings. From darkness emerge cooks grasping cleavers, and mysterious solitary tennis players. What has occurred in Rose’s paintings?”

“This poetic behavior expresses ulterior meanings beyond the animated chromatic backdrops. A germinating, twin world emerges, speculative, but of inverted tones, similar to the negative of a photograph. Enigmas one could say obscure prophecies that break up the idyllic woods.... the calm



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equilibrium recalling the aulic indifference of Piero becomes a remote reference, visionary transfiguration, and ironic quotation.”

Paolo Turcis and Sean Gaston wrote accompanying essays for the exhibition catalogue Sinfonia di Cappelli published by Edizioni LaLoggia in 2007. Paolo Turcis, Serena Burroni, and Federica Tiripelli in addition provided analysis of specific paintings. The essay L'Universo Gemino (the Twin Universe) outlined aspects of Rose's Italian work, and made an attempt to locate his work within the context of contemporary society. Paolo Turcis is an expert on the work of Alberto Sughi, and has assisted Giovanni Faccenda (director of the civic museum of modern and contemporary art in Arezzo) in the cataloguing of Sughi's work. Above are excerpts from the essay L'Universo Gemino.

Excerpt from catalogue introduction by Ugo Agostinelli, director of Galleria LaLoggia:

“I saw a painting, possibly from the *ottocenesca* in a shop window. Suddenly I was taken with it and asked about its author. I realized that it wasn't a work of a painter from the past but of a contemporary, an English cosmopolitan artist who lived in Sansepolcro and was completely unknown as a painter.”

Galleria LaLoggia in Sansepolcro, directed by Ugo Agostinelli, has been responsible for several important exhibitions in central Italy. These include solo shows of Alberto Sughi, Adriano Alunni, Mimmo Rotella and Laura Fiumi in addition to the grand twentieth century retrospective Da DeChirico a Ferroni curated by Giovanni Faccenda.

Excerpt from “But What Are Those Chefs Cooking?” by Jonathan Saville

“It is a general truth that the artistic imagination is beyond explanation by causes and contexts. Imagination is, in the deepest sense, the artist himself, his signature, his freedom. In this case, we are confronted with an imagined world that is all the more bizarre because, at first, it seems merely a bit enigmatic. It is only after you have looked at Rose's paintings for a considerable while, without distractions (for these pictures are uncannily silent, and the least outside noise can break their spell), that their limitless strangeness reveals itself. . . . No explanations are given: if the artist knows the answers, he has taken care not to communicate his knowledge. . . . it is from the figure scenes that one gets the full force of the ineffable mystery this artist can evoke. . . .

After a while, one begins to perceive a curious density lying not in the specific natural objects but in the artist's vision of them. The world Rose shows us is thick, dark, sculptural yet fluid, a kind of slowly moving lava of being that has clotted into natural forms, but that seems capable of being stirred into motion again, when it will gradually dissolve this scene and with its viscous eddies and upthrusts compose another.”

“The reductive treatment of forms and surfaces in Rose's pictures-- another example of this odd, dark, geometrized world --is the exquisite Fete Trumpeter he calls Pastoral, is reminiscent of Piero della Francesca, and so is the static quality, as though time and action were suspended forever. But the artists these paintings remind me of most are from 18th century Venice: Pietro Longhi, with his peculiarly mysterious genre scenes, and Domenico Tiepolo, whose strange pictures of white-costumed clowns in their tall smoke-stack hats may have given inspiration to Rose for his own preoccupation with chefs, and here is the oddest (and most delightful) fact of all about William Balthazar Rose: that an artist in this day and age should ignore all current fashions and take as his model Venetian art of the 18th Century, and make something so wonderful of it!”

Jonathan Saville wrote the review of the sellout exhibition at Thomas Babeor and Company Gallery in La Jolla, California, where the entire collection of paintings was sold to the collection of Mason Phelps, a director of the San Diego County Museum.

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