

Go Figure!

Between Fiction and Autobiography

Exhibition of Modern & Contemporary paintings by Tony Bevan RA,
Sir Claude Francis Barry, John Minton, Robert Greene, Jason Butler & Mark Guest



Preview Days: Friday 5th March, midday - 7pm, Saturday 6th March, 10am - 5pm

Exhibition runs: Monday 8th March - Friday 5th April (except Sundays)

Online viewing rooms at www.privateandpublic.com For further information contact:

Chris Clifford, Gallery Director on 07797 714186 or chris@privateandpublic.com



Introduction



Chris Clifford, BA (Hons) MA
Gallery Director

It's astounding to me how normal and uncontroversial the picturing of the emotional and psychic travails of everyday life has become through the auspices of what 20th century Modernism would have cast as retrograde.

When I look back at the vicious culture wars between art theory and practice from the 1960's to the 1990's and the intestinal contortions needed in order to surface even the vaguest references to personal experience it makes the current trend towards figurative painting seem almost unimaginable.

In fact the intellectual arguments against romanticised representational painting have raged for nearly two centuries ever since the prominent French painter Paul Delaroche, upon seeing the first daguerreotype photographs in 1840, was attributed with the earth shattering quote 'Painting is Dead'.

And yet here they are in abundance, today's most sought after artists are constructing fictions that expand to accommodate socially and culturally marginalised positions whilst seeking to reset assumptions about what constitutes content.

Figurative painters such as Jules de Balincourt, Michael Borremans and Salman Toor are producing paintings that we can love and hate in equal measure because they are instantly relatable.

I read an interesting observation by the British art critic Matthew Collings recently in which he pointed out that one of the central tenets of progressive artistic practice was the initial unease it instilled in the viewer. That disquieting feeling that makes you want to reject something while simultaneously making you anxious that you've not missed the point. This artistic device is the *de rigueur* 'emotional trigger' now deployed by narrative painters who want to be noticed.

Older generations of 'conceptual artists' who I've spoken to about this current trend towards figuration say that they feel cowed into self-doubt by the warm critical embrace it has quickly achieved, it's market penetration and the often uncomplicated means of expression it offers.

But it seems that now more than ever that artists are proposing a 'new realism' that positions us on familiar ground and provides a sense of security in an ever more confusing world where fact and fiction are increasingly hard to distinguish.

In recent years, in literature but also in film and fine art practice, autobiography and memoir have made a notable resurgence. Their present day variants have sometimes been referred to as 'narrative essay' 'autobiographic fiction' or simply 'autofiction'.

Critics attribute the phenomenon to the rise of social media. It is now entirely normal for anyone to narrate their own life to a wider audience.

The diverse writers associated with autofiction range from Rachel Cusk to Ta-Nehisi Coates to Maggie Nelson, all noted for portraying "both their fictional and putatively authentic 'selves' as nodes in which social forces interact". They examine how the 'self' is formed through social constructs of gender, sexuality and race as well as the personal dimensions of capitalism and its class structures.

In this, our first exhibition of 2021, Private & Public Gallery present to you the works of six genuinely outstanding artists who have used figuration as a means to express their feelings about the society in which they live.

So it is with great pleasure that I throw open the doors to visitors at the start of a new year pregnant with hope and a genuine desire to see the anxieties of 2020 consigned to history.

Robert Greene

Robert Greene was born in Jersey in 1976 and went on to study at the Royal College of Art in London where his figurative illustrations were described as 'Victorian Punk Revivalism'. Noted as one of the founders of the hugely influential Le Gun magazine Greene has produced largely autobiographical works across a range of different mediums such as film, posters, typography, drawings and paintings and rose to prominence as part of the semi-fictional artist duo 'The Rubbishmen' who inhabited the salubrious drinking dens and sleazy underworld of London's Soho. His new works, inspired by his time in Paris during lockdown continue to explore his fascination with bohemian intellectualism using great humour and wit. His new works form part of 'Spiritus Paris' series which are said to provide 'a dérive' through the time and space fabric of Paris.



Robert Greene

One Summers Day at Parc Des Buttes Chaumont

2021

Pen, Ink and Watercolour

152cm x 101cm Framed

£5,000



Robert Greene
Fontaine Saint Michel
2021
Pen, Ink and Watercolour
101cm x 152cm Framed
£5,000



Robert Greene

Comrades of the Republic of
Dreams gather at Dèsert de
Retz

Pen, Ink and Watercolour

152cm x 101cm Framed

£5,000



Robert Greene

One Afternoon when Time
Collided in Boris De Vincennes
2021

Pen, Ink and Watercolour

152cm x 101cm Framed

£5,000

Jason Butler

Jason Butler was born in Nottingham in 1970. He studied at Bristol University for his Art Foundation Course and Cheltenham Art College for his degree in Fine Art. Jason has had his work accepted for various exhibitions in the UK including The BP Award at the National Portrait Gallery, London in 2002, 2004 & 2010. He was shortlisted for the BP Travel Award in 2010 and he has twice been commissioned by the States of Jersey to make paintings commemorating Royal visits and also painted Colin Powell OBE for Jersey Heritage in 2009.

Of his work Jason has said “I am fascinated by the idea of Utopias and the kind of rituals we carry out. Trying to get the work to say something that I could never articulate verbally is the main goal. The process of allowing the work to go through many stages is key”.



Jason Butler
Folly II,
200 x 110cm
Oil on Linen
2013
£10,000



Jason Butler
Party Pooper
2014
195 x 270cm
Oil on Linen
£20,000



Jason Butler
The Colour of the Earth
2015
210 x 190cm
Oil on linen
£17,500



Jason Butler

The Painter

2016

210 x 190cm

Oil on linen

£17,500



Jason Butler
The Rubbish Men
2012
150cm x 12cm
Oil on Linen

Tony Bevan RA

Tony Bevan RA (born 1951) is a preeminent British painter, known for his psychologically charged images of people at the edge of respectable society. Bevan came to prominence as an artist in the 1980s, taking part in the ICA show 'Before it hits the Floor' in 1982, Problems of Picturing, curated by Sarah Kent and held at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 1982-83, and The British Art Show, a touring exhibition of contemporary art, in 1984. Bevan has work in many major art collections around the world, including Arts Council England, the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, the British Museum, the Louisiana Museum in Denmark, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Tate.



Tony Bevan RA
Self Portrait
2012
Acrylic on Canvas
107cm x 108cm
£45,000

Sir Claude Francis Barry

Sir Claude Francis Barry was born into an aristocratic family in 1883 and spent the last 20 years of his life in Jersey until his passing in 1970. He made representational paintings that have an aesthetic sensibility that is perhaps more French than British. The symbolism of the Pont Aven School, the decorative distortions of the Nabis and the colourful exuberance of the Fauves all find echoes in his extraordinary and highly collectable portraiture.



Sir Claude Francis Barry

Beryl

1958

Oil on Canvas

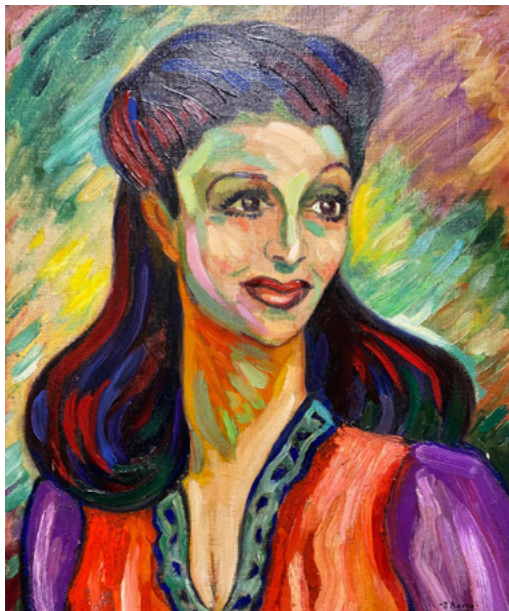
95.5cm x 73.6cm

£33,000



Sir Claude Francis Barry
Doreen, Isobel and Sarah
1959

Oil on Canvas
134.5cm x 99cm
£45,000



Sir Claude Francis Barry

The Actress Doreen

1957

Oil on Canvas

54.5cm x 43cm

£19,000

John Minton

John Minton (1917 – 1957) was an English painter, illustrator, stage designer and teacher. After studying in France, he became a teacher in London, and at the same time maintained a consistently large output of works. In addition to landscapes, portraits and other paintings, some of them on an unusually large scale, he built up a reputation as an illustrator of books.

In the mid-1950s, Minton found himself out of sympathy with the abstract trend that was then becoming fashionable, and felt increasingly sidelined. He suffered psychological problems, self-medicated with alcohol, and in 1957 died by suicide. His portrait, by Lucien Freud, is one of the great 20th century masterpieces.



John Minton
Harbour Scene
1949
Oil on Canvas
51cm x 76cm
£55,000

Mark Guest

Mark Guest (Born Jersey 1971) is a contemporary stone carver and artist delivering public and private sculptural projects. He has an extensive portfolio of sculpture and keeps a working studio in Jersey.

Mark has undertaken many public commissions in Jersey including a 'Granite Ring' sculpture for the Millennium Town Park, granite seating for Jersey Tourism and was lead artist on the way-marking project 'Gorselands Jersey' which was a Planning & Environment initiative.

Of his work Mark says, "My sculpture finds expression in the carving process; cutting stone so fine that it has luminosity or splitting forms into boundless visual riddles".



Mark Guest
Figure I
2015
Limestone
60cm high
£1,500

Mark Guest
Figure II
2015
Limestone
60cm high
£1,500



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