

TJ·BOULTING

HENRY HUDSON | HOMINIDAE

21st November – 26th January - Private View Tuesday 20th November, 7-9pm

TJ Boulting is delighted to present the second solo show with the gallery of British artist Henry Hudson. 'Hominidae' explores a series of ten portraits of his family, in particular based around the village of Wick where many of them live. The title refers to the taxonomic classification of the 'great apes' of which two of the main groups are humans and chimpanzees. Hudson chanced upon the name whilst researching his thoughts on the show, which will look at the physical and psychological traits and collective characteristics of different members of his family, brought together under this one classification. 'Great Apes' is also the title of a book by British writer Will Self, and where he coincidentally spends a lot of time in Wick.

The relatives are pictured in their bedrooms, sprawled on the bed, in their own private chambers and surrounded by their various attributes. The paintings are psychological, there is an element of intimacy or a shared confessional. The bed becomes the psychiatrist's couch of the artist and his sitter. It is also as Hudson states "the place of break ups and marriages, life and death, nightmares, dreams, sleep, love making." The sitters unwittingly reveal themselves, and collectively the family portrait is disjointed and the classic modern dystopian dysfunction of the modern happy family. Fragile tape is wound round heads or over mouths as if to stifle and suppress, giving the sense that this is not in fact the full picture, that there is more beyond the surface of these classic English country portraits, that would have traditionally hung side by side in the family pile.

Hudson's work has often explored the theme of Britishness in recent years, and in particular its streaks of eccentricity or debauchery, his most recent body of work re-presented for example Hogarth's 'The Rake's and Harlot's Progress,' a modern tale of sin and morality. Hudson's paintings are also notable for the fact that he has used plasticine as his chosen medium for several years, since he first felt the need to eschew expensive oil paints in favour of a more economic medium, but since found himself drawn to exploring and perfecting the technique of painting with the everyday's play material. Now the use of plasticine has become a statement in itself for the artist, incorporating ideas of childhood, with adult humour and a foray into depravity.

Hudson takes his inspiration from the great painters of the twentieth century, particularly the 'School of London' figures Frank Auerbach and Lucien Freud, as well as Francis Bacon, David Hockney, Paula Rego and Alice Neel. He draws on their mastery of the portrait, social commentary and use of a theatrically staged composition. He finds particular affinity with their use of dramatic lighting and shadow, strong blocks of colour and form framing their figures as they lie prostrate or perch on the edge of their respective beds. The plasticine medium is both painting yet sculptural. According to artist Marc Quinn, "Hudson aligns himself with an irreverent and eccentric British tradition in art that is really the saviour of it...it's a lineage of non-conformity yet quintessentially Britishness that is unique to our tradition. Hudson has re-invented this tradition in his visual, trembling, vibrating, sculpted paintings."

Here Hudson turns his enquiring and eccentric gaze back to what he knows best, the most colourful and intriguing characters he could hope for, and they are all real – his family.

BIOGRAPHY

Henry Hudson completed his studies in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins in 2005 and since then has had several solo and group exhibitions both in London as well as in Milan, New York and most recently Beijing. His work has explored themes from Britishness to self-portraiture, and most notably the study of William Hogarth's two renowned series of social satire and morality 'The Rake's Progress' and 'The Harlot's Progress', which was shown at Sir John Soane's Museum in 2011. His contemporary take on the historical and traditional can also be seen through his eschewing of oil paint for the use of plasticine on board, whilst he has been described by art critic Richard Dorment as an 'extraordinary young painter'. He lives and works in London.

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