



RYAN MOSLEY

Census

Opening: 06/03/08, 7 p.m.
Exhibition: 07/03/08 – 30/04/08

Press release

*Rub-a-dub-dub! Three maids in a tub, and who do you think were there?
The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, and all of them gone to the fair!*

Traditional English nursery rhyme, 14th century

Engholm Engelhorn Galerie is pleased to present the début solo exhibition of **Ryan Mosley**, a recent graduate of London's Royal College of Art.

The fourteen new paintings that make up the exhibition, while varied in terms of size and subject matter, can be seen as a single, coherent body of work. They operate as a visual ensemble, leading the viewer from the safety and comfort of the gallery into a strange world of carnivalesque characters that we do not immediately recognize or understand. The painted faces and plump, fleshy limbs, the costumes, masks and props, challenge us to make sense of what it is we are looking at. Our imaginations are put to work to sort through the rich lexicon of colours, signs and symbols, to make associations and establish some sense of order within it all.

The exhibition's title *Census* refers to that exhaustive study conducted periodically by a government of its people in which members of the public are assigned to various pre-determined constituencies according to race, religion, wealth or wherewithal. It encourages a certain reading of the works. Almost without realising it, we find ourselves thrust into a position of authority and obliged to pass judgement on the status and identity of those unlikely individuals that look down at us from the walls. Among the questions of hierarchy, class and profession, certain familiarities begin to emerge. We make out the tousled epaulette of a soldier, the Sunday robes of a clergyman and a pair of star-crossed lovers. The succession of smaller, single portraits suggests some sort of past ancestral lineage, a thought echoed in the appearance of skulls, traditional reminders of our mortality, nestled within the psychological cornucopia of the larger works.

Looking more closely at the works it gradually becomes clear that a good deal more information sits just beneath their thin, washed surfaces, concealed by a careful process of removal and reworking. It is a subtle and sophisticated device delicately employed to add an even greater depth to the pictures' complexity. It allows them to remain active, almost restless in their relationships with each other and thereby with the viewer too.

Born in 1980 in Chesterfield, **Ryan Mosley** completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Huddersfield before studying at the Royal College of Art, London. He graduated in 2007 and now lives and works in London. A group of recent works will be presented at the new Saatchi Gallery, London, in 2008 as part of the forthcoming exhibition *New Britannia*.

For further information about the exhibition please contact Kerstin Engholm on +43 1 585 7337.