

THE ISLANDERS

GALERIE MIKAEL ANDERSEN



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TOM ANHOLT
BILLY CHILDISH
RYAN MOSLEY
ROSE WYLIE

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FOREWORD / MIKAEL ANDERSEN

It is with great pleasure that I present this publication on the occasion of the exhibition The Islanders. The exhibition is made up of four British artists, each of whom has made their own mark on the contemporary art scene with figurative painting: Billy Childish, Ryan Mosely, Rose Wylie and Tom Anholt.

The artists' ages range widely, the youngest being 27 and the eldest 80. Although each artist has their own unique expression clear parallels can be drawn, despite the age gap, in their approach to content. The title The Islanders not only refers to the artists place of birth but is the focal point of the motifs in the exhibition.

Galerie Mikael Andersen has been around for 25 years and since the mid-1990s has been focusing on contemporary European art. I am therefore delighted to be showing these four outstanding British artists together in the gallery. I hope very much for it to be a successful collaboration, both for the gallery and the artists.

I wish to thank Jane Neal for the successful working partnership, as well as Joanna Deans for the graphic work and Michael Sakkalli for the publication of this book. Finally I would like to thank Bea Fonnesbech that has held everything together throughout the whole exhibition.

THE ISLANDERS / JANE NEAL

Why slum it where people were burdened by yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that. By history? Here on the Island, they had learnt how to deal with history, how to sling it carelessly on your back and stride out across the download with the breeze in your face' Julian Barnes, *England England*

'The Islanders' brings together the work of four English painters, each representing a different generation: Tom Anholt, Billy Childish, Ryan Mosley and Rose Wylie. Besides their nationality, the four artists share in common an interest in the British land and sea scape - both physical and psychological. Stereotypes such as 'the English eccentric', 'the Explorer', 'the collector', 'the sportsman', the loner', and 'the performer' play their part in contributing to this perception of what we might call: 'The Islander' mentality, which has given rise to some of the idiosyncrasies associated with the 'British character'.

The English poet, John Donne, famously claimed: 'No man is an island', but writer Neil Gaman argued that he was very wrong: 'If we were not islands we would be lost drowned in each other's tragedies. We are insulated (a word that means literally, remember, made into an island) from the tragedy of others by our island nature, and by the repetitive shape and form of the stories.'

The significance of the relationship between the individual with the land and sea is therefore heightened when viewed in the context of the notion of the island. Taking up Neil's argument, it even shapes our very being; it is always there, maybe not at the forefront of our minds, necessarily, but in our make up, and certainly in our history.

Until relatively recently, the sea and the waterways through Britain were vital arteries for delivering food and produce necessary to the 'Islanders' survival. The weight of this has left its mark on the psyche of the Islanders and the dream-like narratives and richly metaphoric imagery of these four artists could be said to derive some inspiration from the resonance of the history of their own island and experiences, along with the absorption of the myths and folk tales that have become part of a shared collective unconscious.

There is a dream-like surreal quality that marks out the work of all four artists. Though each painter is distinct and unique in his style, motivation, and perspective, there is a shared fluidity in their use of line and gesture. We can find echoes of the free-flowing paintings of the Masters of late 19th and early 20th Century Expressionism such as the works of Van Gogh, Munch, Schiele and Chagall. Perhaps this connection is particularly poignant when we consider that the musicality inherent in the work of these four contemporary British painters does not reflect the pace of today's world. Instead their dream like visions appear to have been derived from another time, or even to be outside of time. We are reminded of the free-flowing images conjured up for us by the subconscious; a current that runs parallel to the frenetic pace of our 21 Century conscious world. Like a fast moving tide, it throws up surprises, challenges and long-hidden, deep-buried objects; artefacts from the archaeology of the Island.

Story telling is also a shared concern. In the case of Rose Wylie, she often turns to subjects such as football players, or film, that are accessible to everyone in order to facilitate what she calls a 'contemporary bonding' with her viewers. Each artist communicates a different message, but each is telling a tale: Mosley often addresses the carnivalesque, even the grotesque - but interestingly, like Wylie, he has also tackled the subjects of the circus. Anholt's characters appear to exist in a fantastical world, that is convincing in its familiarity, and consistency, but nonetheless feels like a waking dream. Childish, (like Wylie), often draws inspiration from the Kent landscape where he has lived and worked all his life, but there is a heightened intensity, an expressionistic quality that reminds us of the greats of the 19th Century such as Gauguin, Van Gogh and Munch.

Returning again like the tide to the subject of the Islanders, It is possible with all four artists to situate them within an as yet, undefined British context that could be said to have its beginnings in the early 20th Century, in the Cornish coastal town of St Ives. Looking first to the naive paintings of

Alfred Wallis, artists such as Christopher Wood and Ben Nicholson were persuaded to follow a new and modern direction in their practice. If we then fast forward to the early 1990's, we arrive at the hugely influential work of Peter Doig, whose painting has particular resonance with the work of Anholt, Childish and Mosley. Doig cites the Romantic, Impressionist and Expressionist painters: Caspar David Friedrich, Claude Monet, Edvard Munch and Gustav Klimt as major influences, and it is possible to also find their auras hovering around - to lesser and greater degrees - the work of these three contemporary painters.

It is Surrealism though that undergirds the practice of all four artists, but their dream-like landscapes are balanced by a fresh immediacy (that in Wylie's case is also especially evident in her drawings). An ability to present their subjects from often unexpected angles, sometimes using intense - even psychedelic - colour palettes, also reinforces this reading of the artists' work through a Surrealist lens. The observation of strange, idiosyncratic details such as legs, skulls and bizarre millinery runs like a leitmotif across the four artists' paintings, often manifesting in humorous ways. The act of painting itself is challenged at times by Anholt and Wylie. The former likes to lay paper or wood flat on a table because he can work in a more physical manner this way, the latter talks of how she often paints on the floor because it links to what many women find themselves doing far too often throughout their lives: scrubbing and cleaning on their hands and knees. In this way then, Wylie's paintings (from her own admission), could be said to be oblique references to male domination, but also to the isolation of the individual and to the existential crisis that so often governs the creative drive of the artist.

All four artists are strongly individual in their approach to their art making. At times their work focuses on the individual alone in the landscape, sometimes confronting the figure of death himself, at other times referencing death or the consciousness of time passing, through memento mori such as skulls or a skeletons. As afore mentioned, a decidedly British, ironic sense of

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humour can be found lacing its way through the artists' paintings. Again this plays into the notion or stereotype of the 'Islander' mentality: defensive, at times provocative, but always able to see the funny side of life, even if the humour that is employed to do this is dark and sardonic. Sometimes it is the protagonists depicted in the paintings and drawings who are humorous - cartoon-like even - at other times, the references are more subtle, latent rather than obvious but nonetheless there, just as the awareness of being on an island - slightly removed from the rest of the continent - could be said to run deep in the psyche, history and folklore of a nation and all the individuals islands who inhabit it.

JANE NEAL is an independent art critic, curator and author. She writes for a wide variety of international publications including: *Art Review* and *l'Officiel Art* and was invited to nominate artists for and contribute to Phaidon's *Vitamin P2*, and *Vitamin D2*. She co-authored '21 Century Avant- Garde Cities' for Phaidon and recently curated 'Nightfall', considered one of the most important surveys of contemporary figurative painting this Century.

THE ARTISTS

TOM ANHOLT / 10
BILLY CHILDISH / 22
RYAN MOSLEY / 28
ROSE WYLIE / 36

TOM ANHOLT



Village in the Rain, 2014
Oil on panel, 150 x 130 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Mikael Andersen
Photography: Jan Søndergaard

TOM ANHOLT



Studio Garden, 2014
Oil on panel, 150 x 130 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Mikael Andersen
Photography: Marco Reichert

TOM ANHOLT



Journeyman, 2014
Oil on panel, 60 x 50 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Mikael Andersen
Photography: Marco Reichert

TOM ANHOLT



Man Hunt, 2014
Oil on panel, 30 x 35 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Mikael Andersen
Photography: Marco Reichert

TOM ANHOLT



The Island VI, 2014
Oil on panel, 30 x 35 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Mikael Andersen
Photography: Marco Reichert

TOM ANHOLT



Irish Family, 2014
Oil on panel, 30 x 40 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Mikael Andersen
Photography: Jan Søndergaard



BILLY CHILDISH



man in oak leaves version, 2014
Oil and charcoal on linen, 183 x 244 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Neugerriemschneider, Berlin
Photographer: Rikard Osterlund

BILLY CHILDISH



the great banks (after Wilkinson) version, 2014
Oil and charcoal on linen, 183 x 274 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Neugerriemschneider, Berlin
Photographer: Rikard Osterlund

BILLY CHILDISH



man reclining on willow tree, Kroonstad 1901, 2013
Oil and charcoal on linen, 122 x 152.5 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Galerie Neugerriemschneider, Berlin
Photographer: Rikard Osterlund



RYAN MOSLEY



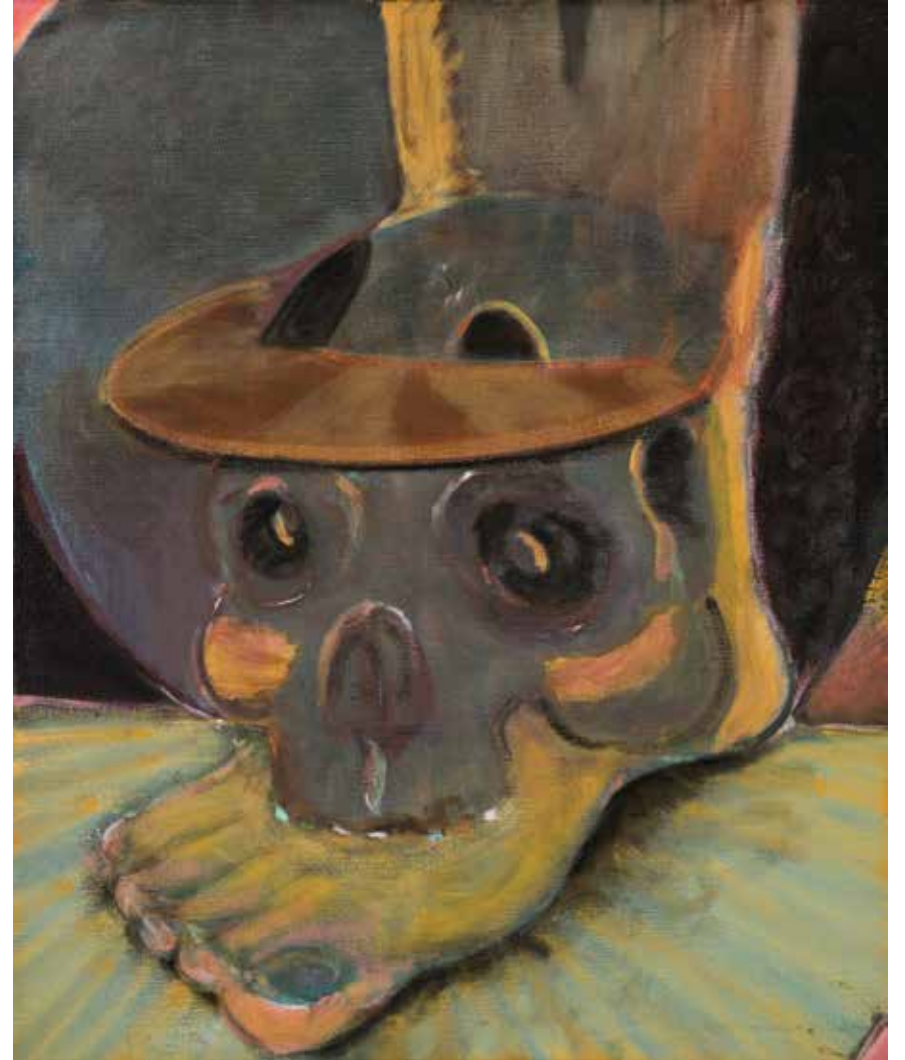
Histoires Encore, 2012
Oil on linen, 35 x 30 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London
Photographer: Michael Brzezinski

RYAN MOSLEY



Distant Ancestor XI, 2013
Oil on linen on board, 120 x 100 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London
Photographer: Michael Brzezinski

RYAN MOSLEY

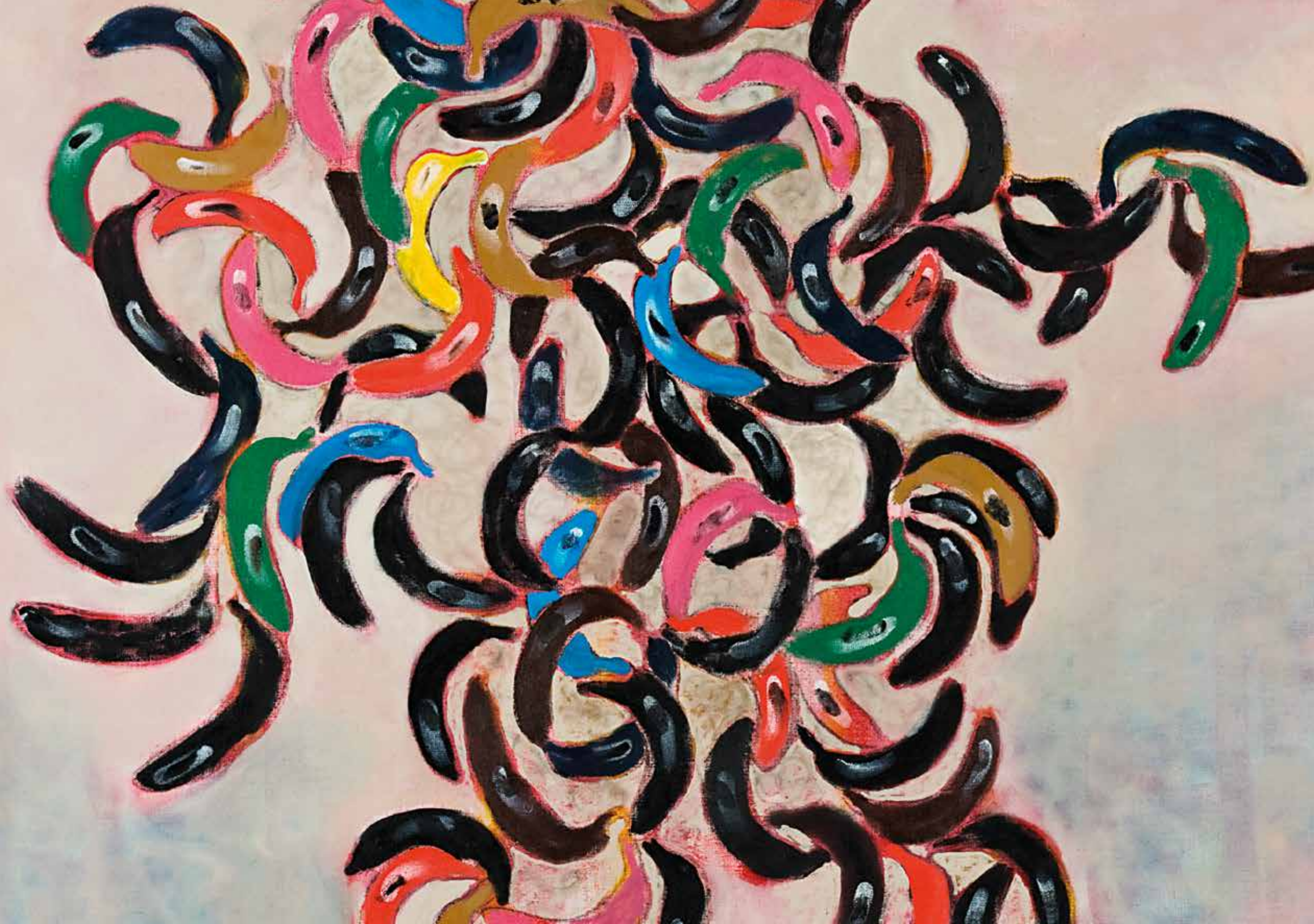


Dead Leg, 2014
Oil on linen, 60 x 50 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London
Photographer: Michael Brzezinski

RYAN MOSLEY



The Educationalist, 2014
Oil on linen, 220 x 190 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Alison Jacques Gallery, London
Photographer: Michael Brzezinski



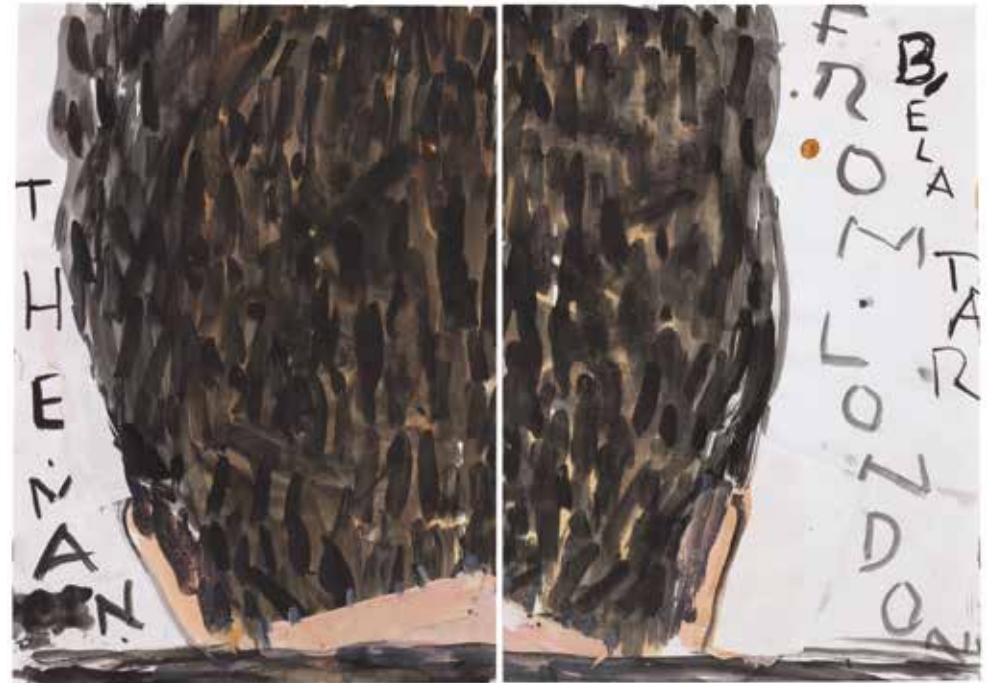
ROSE WYLIE



Gold Lumb (single), 2012
Oil on canvas, 165 x 182 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Union Gallery, London
Photographer: Jan Søndergaard

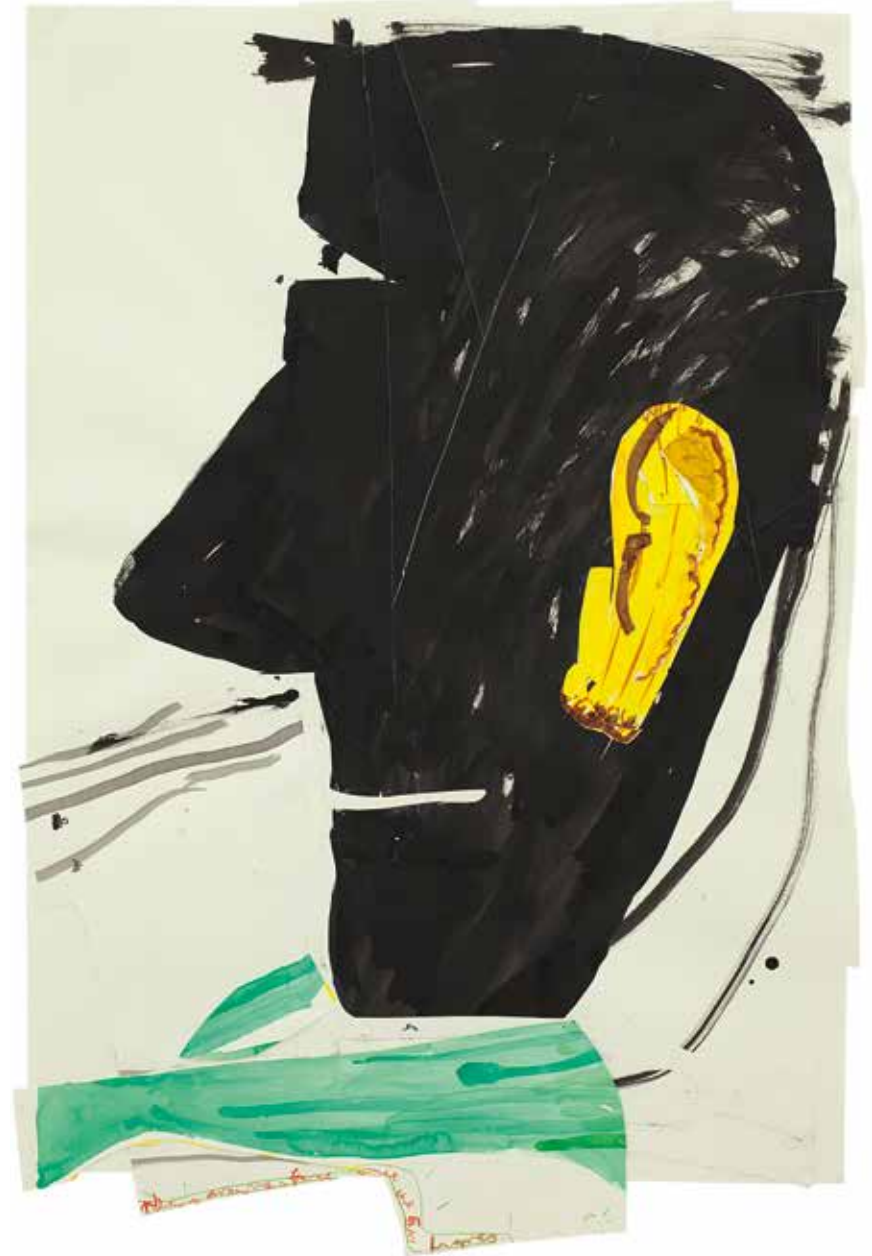


Ack-Ack, 2004
Oil on canvas, 183 x 193 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Union Gallery, London
Photographer: Erling Lykke Jeppesen



The Man from London (film notes) (Thanks to Bella Tarr), 2010
Watercolour of paper, 30 x 42 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Union Gallery, London
Photographer: Erling Lykke Jeppesen

ROSE WYLIE



Never When Painting a Face Omit the Ear (JT), 2012
Watercolour and ink on paper, 90 x 63 cm
Copyright the artist
Courtesy Union Gallery, London
Photographer: Erling Lykke Jeppesen



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Kevin Clarke and Jari-Juhani Lager at Union Gallery

Faoud Kanaan at Alison Jacques Gallery

Michael Sakkalli

BIOGRAPHIES

TOM ANHOLT was born in Bath, in 1987. After a foundation course at Falmouth College of Art and Design, Anholt studied Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design for his B.A. On graduating, rather than stay in London, he relocated to Berlin, where he currently lives and works, in order to allow himself the time and space to focus completely on his painting. Although young, Anholt has been painting and drawing on a daily basis for as long as he can remember. Anholt has had two solo shows with Galerie Mikael Andersen, 'Man Made' (2013) in Berlin and 'Rainbow Walk' (2014) in Copenhagen. He has taken part in numerous group shows including a recent exhibition at Galerie Kornfeld in Berlin.

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WILLIAM HAMPER (AKA BILLY CHILDISH) was born in 1959 Chatham, Kent. After leaving school at 16 he worked at the Naval Dockyard in Chatham as an apprentice stonemason. He later gained entry to St. Martin's School of Art but was expelled in 1981. Childish then embarked on an artistic odyssey. In 2010 was the subject of major survey exhibitions at the ICA in London and White Columns in New York. In 2014 he showed the series Willow Tree which is inspired by photographic records from the British-South African Boer Wars in a solo exhibition at Neuer Aachener Kunstverein. Childish is Artist in Residence at the 'Historic Dockyard' in Chatham where he continues to paint.

RYAN MOSLEY was born in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, in 1980. He lives and works in Sheffield and London. Mosley was recently described by critic Michael Glover as being: 'One of the most inventive of the younger English painters at work today...a maker of wild, irrational, dancing imagery'. Mosley's protagonists play into the territory of the carnivalesque. They are depicted as free-flowing sinewy forms within a dream-like aesthetic where (like the tradition of carnival itself), the normal rules do not apply. Mosley's characters oscillate between hero and anti-hero, folk legend and beautiful stranger, and though his paintings are timeless, nevertheless his subjects would appear to be more comfortable in the context of 18th or 19th Century street theatre, than against the backdrop of today's urban jungle. Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Band of None', at Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects, Culver City, CA (2014), 'Ryan Mosley' at Alison Jacques Gallery, London, UK (2014), 'Reversed Limbo' at Eigen+Art, Berlin. Recent group exhibitions include: Hurvin Anderson, Nick Goss, Norbert Schwontkowski, Ryan Mosley at Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK (2014), 'Zero Hours', S1 Artspace, Sheffield, UK (2014).

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ROSE WYLIE (born 1934, Kent, UK) lives and works in Kent. After initially giving up painting to raise the children she had with her painter husband, Roy Oxlade, she returned to painting and drawing with a dynamic verve that she has sustained until today, producing often extremely large paintings on unstretched, unprimed canvas, that she lays out on the floor. Inspired by subjects such as footballers and film that she executed in what has at times been described as a child-like or cartoon fashion, Wylie is finally being recognised as one of Britain's most significant contemporary artists. Recently awarded the John Moores Prize (2014), in 2013, she had an exhibition of recent works at Tate Britain London. This followed a retrospective at the Jerwood Gallery, Hastings. In 2010, Wylie was the only non-American artist represented in the Women to Watch exhibition at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.

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The Islanders
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Works by
Tom Anholt, Billy Childish, Ryan Mosley and Rose Wylie

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