



Cyclops – The Way of All Flesh

Friday 29th November – Tuesday 24th December 2013

Private view: Thursday 28th November 6pm-9pm

The Outsiders London enthusiastically welcomes Cyclops for his first solo exhibition with the gallery. The Way of All Flesh features an entirely new suite of paintings displayed for the first time.

Cyclops' art has evolved considerably since his days as a stalwart of London's Burning Candy graffiti crew. His stunning new work fuses Baroque-era portraiture with late Renaissance vanitas paintings, vaporous street art motifs, religious iconography, and utterly contemporary photo-realism.

The artist's early exhibitions featuring work derived from his street pieces, led to a coveted place at the Royal College of Art – alma mater of Lucian Freud and Chris Ofili. So it's fitting that his first major show since graduating has a foot in both camps-street and fine art.

Nine large canvases depicting striking female figures, painted in oils, acrylic and spray paint, dominate the exhibition. A corresponding selection of still life pieces works demonstrate his skills at the easel and grasp of contemporary culture, featuring for instance a skull wearing a cap from cult NY street wear label Supreme.

"This particular body of work is about capturing a moment – a lens-based approach to image making," says the artist, "but I knew that wasn't quite enough, so I've tried to introduce further life into the works, spontaneous elements. I'm interested in images the combine beauty and decay."

These contemplative beauties are adorned in clothing combining Reformation-era fashions with classic street style – including an MA 1 bomber jacket.

"The street gave me the opportunity to paint," says Cyclops of this tribute. The modern-day apparel is far from incongruous though, this being testament to the cohesion of the artist's nonetheless catholic vision. Backgrounds echo the interior designs of the 19th Century Aesthetic movement itself. Urban scrawl around the figures' heads marries abstract urban motifs and the ideas developed at the other end of the spectrum, inside the art institution.

These chic, full-featured heart stealers appear woefully mournful, a powerful combination all the more arresting given the up-tempo lifestyle of the modern metropolitan girl. *"There is a personal aspect to these images. I've had people around me suffering with mental illness... and this idea of a*

troubled, decaying beauty I think is captured in a rose, or the stillness of a face, which is surrounded by chaos."

ENDS

For media enquiries and high resolution imagery contact Purple:

Julia Huff: julia@purplepr.com +44 (0) 207 434 7082

Charlotte Sluter: charlotte@purplepr.com +44 (0) 20 7434 7069

Gallery and sales enquiries contact marine@lazinc.com +44 (0)191 221 2560

About the Artist: Cyclops

Born in 1980, Cyclops pursued an early interest in graffiti, and found himself expelled from school for it. After becoming involved in Manchester's early house music scene, he drifted into an underworld life culminating in a period of addiction.

Funding his way via a talent for forgery, it was ten years before he returned to art after periods of jail and homelessness. With a new appetite for creativity, he quickly became involved in the burgeoning street art scene in London, forming the noted Burning Candy crew.

Cyclops work was shown at Tate Modern gallery as part of its 2008 exhibition *Art on the Street*. Invited by Banksy to appear in *Exit Through the Gift Shop*, he was arrested during filming. The resulting footage was included in the documentary's final cut.

After a series of shows and painting around the world he enrolled in the hugely respected Royal College of Art, being accepted without any prior training or education. He completed a three-year masters' degree. He works from his studio in east London.

The Outsiders Galleries, Newcastle and London

Re-launching the first ever Lazarides gallery spaces under a new heading in July 2010, The Outsiders sells affordable originals, prints, collectibles and books from the Lazarides stable of artists and more. Each of the galleries features project spaces showcasing works from new and emerging talents, as well as offering established Lazarides artists a space to present experimental shows. Space is also given over to an ambitious release schedule of editioned works.

These small run editions, hand finished prints, and works on paper are produced in our own Wapping studio, Execution Dock. The book *Outsiders* is out now published by Thames & Hudson and the organisation is featured in Oscar-nominated documentary *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. Incorporating the online store www.theoutsiders.net and the spaces on London's Greek Street and in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, The Outsiders welcomes over ten thousand visitors annually.

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