

SIMON GRANGER

Waxwings

OUTPOST

2 May to 21 May

12 noon to 6pm daily

Opening View: Sunday 1 May, 6 - 9pm

Open to public - admission free

OUTPOST is pleased to present *Waxwings*, a solo exhibition of work by London-based artist Simon Granger.

For his exhibition at OUTPOST Simon Granger presents us with *Waxwings*, a series of formally precise yet visually absurd hybrid entities, which function as disruptive decoys for meaning. Each miniature canvas depicts cut-and-shut components of human and animal anatomy in a variety of poses. Hovering inexplicably in homogenous virtual spaces, half-human faces are snubbed by oversized beaks, whilst bird-like heads protrude ludicrously from mechanical torsos, equipped with plastic wings and segmented insect tails. A grotesque product of a painted game of consequences, perhaps. Yet Granger's ludicrous animals resist straightforward categorisation, causing the precise purpose and ontology of these monstrous animals to remain elusive in their deceptively simplistic pastel coloured parts.

In the absence of fixed meaning, Granger's paintings invite the viewer to produce a wealth of readings, particularly allusions to other constructed virtual realities in contemporary culture, such as the digital avatars of computer video games and the plastic materiality of children's toys. Yet, despite their visible hybridity, any direct anthropomorphism of these curious creatures is disrupted by Granger's use of numerous strange-making and illusionistic devices.

Significantly explicit in their appropriation of the human form, the caricatured human faces and becoming-animal bodies of Granger's more recent canvases are further distorted by the comic accompaniment of unlikely accessories, from baseball hats to flat caps and solid helmets of hair. Illusory impressions of depth and movement are also suggested by additional soft shadows beneath these ambiguously 'flying' entities, whilst a thin, dark streak of paint on the horizon hints towards an otherworldly sense of space.

Whilst the oblique poise of each creature emphasises a sense of motion within the canvas, Granger's use of the three-quarter view is loaded here. At once reminiscent of commercial photography featured in consumer catalogues, where fetishised products are laid out on display, these miniature paintings also acknowledge the painterly traditions of art history. Replete with neutral expressions, glazed eyes and fixed stares which avert the gaze of the viewer, Granger's monstrous creatures, in many ways, recall the Trompe-l'oeil style, composition and gradation of tone found in Italian Renaissance painting and 15th century Flemish portraiture.

Yet despite their hybrid monstrosity, the repeated distortion of natural forms in Granger's *Waxwings* are not simply the expressions of becoming-animal, nor quirky postmodern takes on the canons of art history. Rather, these finely crafted illusory devices are deliberate, self-reflexive entities intended to distract from the real focus of Granger's endeavors; the processes at work in the act of painting itself.

Simon Granger lives in London and is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Norwich University College of the Arts. Since graduating from the Slade School of Fine Art in 1979 Granger has continued to exhibit widely, with solo presentations at Galerie Reinfeld, Bremen (2004), Danielle Arnaud, London (1999) and 'Animal Paintings' at Gasworks, London (1997). Numerous group exhibitions also include EASTinternational 97 at Norwich Gallery (1997).



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