

PETER HOWSON

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Flowers Gallery is delighted to present an exhibition of works by Scottish painter Peter Howson to coincide with his major retrospective at Edinburgh City Art Centre, *When the Apple Ripens: Peter Howson at 65*.

Considered one of his generation's leading figurative painters, Howson was a focal member of a group of young artists to emerge from Glasgow School of Art in the 1980s, dubbed the 'New Glasgow Boys.' *When the Apple Ripens*, curated by David Patterson, marks Howson's first major retrospective, bringing together over one hundred works from his student days to the present, many of which have never before been shown to the public.

This presentation of works at Flowers Gallery brings together a selection of Howson's works from the 1980s to the present day. Five striking large-scale paintings installed upstairs testify to the artist's forty-year long exploration of human violence and suffering, something activated both by his time as a war artist in Bosnia in the 1990s and his own personal understanding of the struggles of everyday life.

A painting from 1989 titled *The Psycho Squad* marks an early incantation of Howson's career-long critique of collective violence as his characteristically threatening, writhing, sinuous figures charge forth forcefully wielding flags, baseball bats and maces. *Entzauberung* (2018), an arresting work from his 2018 Flowers Gallery exhibition *Act Est Fabula*, evidences his sustained fixation with the crowd motif over the years. Here he depicts a mob brandishing Union Jacks with the unmistakable white cliffs at Dover behind, a confronting and thought-provoking visualisation of issues of nationalism and frontier in contemporary Britain. In a recent painting, *Darkness Visible* (2023), Howson depicts giant figures wrestling a throng of armoured cyborgs, suggesting the potentially corruptive influence of technology on the collective psyche, namely its propensity to incite violence.

In sharp relief to these teeming crowd scenes, other works in this exhibition depict solitary figures, suggestive of the mob's brutal aftermath. *Someone Up There Likes Me*, painted in 1989, shows a figure striding listlessly through empty streets, spotlighted by a glowing streetlight. *Bridge to Nowhere* (1998-9) shows a figure crouched over felled bricks looking up to gloomy skies, his ripped clothes and hopeless expression exposing the devastating consequences of collective violence on individual lives.

When the Apple Ripens: Peter Howson at 65: A Retrospective is at City Art Centre, Edinburgh from 27 May 2023 until 1 October 2023.

For more information and images please contact: Ellie Jeans: ellie.jeans@flowersgallery.com / Hannah Hughes: press@flowersgallery.com, 020 7920 7777



Bridge to Nowhere, 1998-99, oil on canvas, 183 x 122 cm



Clockwise from top left: *Entzauberung*, 2018, oil on canvas, 183.5 x 244.5 cm; *Someone Up There Likes Me*, 1989, oil on canvas, 183 x 122 cm; *The Psycho Squad*, 1989, oil on canvas, 210 x 280 cm

ABOUT PETER HOWSON

Peter Howson was born in London in 1958. Howson was a focal member of the group of young artists to emerge from the Glasgow School of Art during the 1980s dubbed the New Glasgow Boys, and one of his generation's leading figurative painters. He studied at Glasgow School of Art from 1975 - 1977, and returned in 1979 to complete a Masters degree. In 1985 he was made the Artist in Residence at the University of St Andrews and also a part-time tutor at Glasgow School of Art. Howson witnessed the harrowing realities of combat as an official war artist appointed by the Imperial War Museum during the Bosnian War from 1993-4, culminating in a solo exhibition at IWM London in 1994. In 1996 he was awarded Doctor of Letters Honoris Causa, University of Strathclyde. Howson has exhibited extensively in the United States and Europe. His work is represented in public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Tate Gallery, London; the Victoria & Albert Museum, London; the British Museum, London; Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow; and the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

Exhibition Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm. Images © Peter Howson, courtesy of Flowers Gallery