

press release

JOHN KEANE: INTELLIGENT DESIGN

more paintings about war and religion

Private View: THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2009, 6-8 PM



Flowers

82 Kingsland Rd
London
E2 8DP

20 March – 18 April 2009

Opening times: Tue-Sat 10-6

When evolution sceptics wish to attack Charles Darwin's theories, they often point to the human eye. How could something so complex, they argue, have developed through random mutations and natural selection, even over millions of years? Even though Darwin and his followers have provided credible explanations which have answered these questions, 150 years after the publication of *On the Origin of Species* the battle still rages. The starting point of John Keane's new series of paintings, *Intelligent Design* plays with the contrasting belief systems of scientific empiricism and religious faith, and uses image and metaphor of visual perception to reflect upon this conflict of ideas - and the very real conflicts that they continue to fuel.

A series of 'ink blot' paintings use Darwin's face in a Rorschach test to reveal hidden species - butterflies in his eyes, bears in his beard... His face appears miraculously on the body of a Peppered Moth, (a hotly contested species cited by advocates as tangible evidence of evolution), like the Virgin Mary in a piece of toast, or the face of Christ in the Turin Shroud. Keane is playfully suggesting to us that perhaps we see what we want, or are conditioned, to see.

However, the bulk of this new work addresses the atrocities of the war in Iraq and its link to the home grown terrorism that implicates us all. Keane was the official war artist for the Imperial War Museum during the first Gulf war, but this is the first time he has made reference to the current conflict in Iraq. In a series of powerful and disturbing paintings, subjects include mutilations of the human body and the torture of prisoners - hooded and deprived of sight. Other subjects allude to the London tube bombings, the attack on Glasgow airport, and the murder of Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam. All of these atrocities grasp at a perceived justification seen through a prism of ideology and religion. In this exhibition, Keane is boldly and uncompromisingly confronting the belief systems and perceived threats that increasingly divide the population of a planet which should really be addressing the far more serious issue of it's own survival.

For further information or images please contact Ellie Harrison-Read at Flowers East on 020 7920 7777 or email ellie@flowerseast.com

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