

STANDING

ROOM

ONLY

3 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 2010
PRIVATE VIEW SATURDAY 31 JULY 4 - 6PM

DEREK BOSHIER
KEN CURRIE
NICOLA HICKS
PETER HOWSON
CLAERWEN JAMES
LUCY JONES
JOHN KEANE
JOHN KIRBY
ISHBEL MYERSCOUGH
JIRO OSUGA
ADRIA SARTORE
TAI-SHAN SCHIERENBERG
JONATHAN WALLER
ALISON WATT
LYNETTE YIADOM-BOAKYE

FLOWERS
82 KINGSLAND ROAD
LONDON E2 8DP

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Hands hang limp against the creases of a dress, press purposefully onto mottled thighs, curl into gargantuan fists. Palms are exposed in a gesture of offering, raised to entice the viewer's gaze beyond the frame, folded artfully behind an impassable figure.

The tradition of portraiture offers us many heavenly bodies; sublimely twisted torsos adorned with carefully choreographed symbolic semaphores; bodies upon which beauty, sovereignty and majesty of history are writ large. The portraits exhibited here confront this tradition in a full frontal attack, precluding aesthetic distance and disinterested contemplation by demanding a human-scale encounter with their viewer.

They depict bodies, multifarious and irregular, yet allied in the plight of conjuring a collective sense of unease, of forming a composite anatomy at once seductive and repellent. Their symbolic lexicon is so minimal that the interpretative props they do offer – a featureless walking stick, held at an oblique angle to suggest its absurdity as a bodily substitute; an apple resting on the windowsill of a domestic Eden governed by an alternative Eve; a carefully balanced bucket of water, its glittering cargo dazzling and anomalous in the arid surrounds of an African shanty town – achieve a disquieting resonance.

The painting black of the subjects' surrounds, whether literal, or through the tenebrous clutter of their environs, is a thread that unites many of these portraits. Perfectly delineated imperfect flesh gleams out against a colourless, flattened picture plane; a dense slick of darkness descends on a figure so monstrous and immense that it threatens to break free of the canvas, unimpaired by the dull punch of streetlights that are the painting's sole contextual footholds.

In many of the works, both symbolism and subjectivity are condensed into shadow. A statuesque woman, lips and dress stained the colour of wine, cloth clinging to her confident figure, spilling into a sanguine pool beneath her, is haunted by a shadow that snakes genie-like from her body; a plume of vapour threatening to engulf her. A young girl dressed in the same carmine hue, face prematurely drawn and hair dishevelled, meets the viewer face-on in an unnerving wordless entreaty. Her shadow, like her juvenile frame, is willowy, faint and incongruous against her black setting; shooting out from under her feet in broken shards of half-light. A 'Man with a View' chooses to turn away from his a brilliant vista, folding into his own shadow as he directs his gaze on the viewer, drawing the shutters on his window to the world.

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