

# FLOWERS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## CLAERWEN JAMES

MAY 21 - JUNE 26 2010

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### OPENING RECEPTION

THURSDAY MAY 20 6 - 8 pm

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*Girl, 10* 2010, Oil on board, 56 x 48¼ in / 142 x 122 cm

**Flowers** is pleased to announce the New York City debut of British artist **Claerwen James** with an exhibition of her new paintings that will run from May 21st through June 26th, 2010. A catalog with a foreword by *New Yorker* critic Anthony Lane will accompany the exhibition. The opening reception for the artist will be held on May 20th, from 6-8pm.

"It is in the nature of any good portrait to withhold as much as it yields, carefully measuring out such information as it contains, keeping plenty in reserve, and thus entering into a new deal, or pact, with every viewer." This statement by Anthony Lane describes precisely what **Claerwen James** has done in this new series of paintings, mostly of girls and young women. Her work stands at a deliberate distance to the moments it explores. There is a watchfulness about the figures as they stare out of the picture: a muted privacy that suggests intimacy but gives nothing away.

All of the works originated as photographs: some scavenged, some taken by the artist, who believes that the awkwardness of the photographic moment is crucial to the painful, elegiac quality of the paintings. Among the images used are those from **Claerwen James'** own childhood as well as photographs of Alice Liddell, "taken not in Wonderland but through the ordinary lens of Lewis Carroll's camera," writes Lane. "We like to think of a photograph as an instant frozen in time, in which case the task of this particular painter is to thaw it out. The paintings remain very still and unexcitable, but that does not make them uneventful; they defrost their central figures and reanimate not just the moment to which the photograph bore witness but the broader span of life which the photographer, whether by chance or design, happened to interrupt."

In 2006, Francis Spufford wrote that **Claerwen James'** subject matter is, in a sense, the photographic moment, when a point in time is snatched from the flow, "sealed into stillness and set in strange relationship to the continued life. . . which we do not see in photographs but which they always imply, giving the medium its mortal edge."

**Claerwen James**, born in 1970, originally trained as a molecular biologist at Oxford University and Cold Spring Harbor, NY. She graduated from the prestigious Slade School of Fine Art in 2003 and has gone on to have two highly successful solo exhibitions in London's West End. She has won various awards such as the Prince's Drawing School Graduate Bursary, the Arts Club Excellence in Drawing Award; and most notably the Slade School's own Melvill Nettleship Prize for Figure Composition: previous winners include Gwen John and Gwen Raverat. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Scheringa Museum of Realist Art in the Netherlands.

**For further information and images, please contact Brent Beamon: 212.439.1700 / [brent@flowersgalleries.com](mailto:brent@flowersgalleries.com)**

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