

Faith

gallery

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Alonso



Curated by David Hancock

Exhibition runs from 6th March - 13th April

Private View-Thursday 6th March 6-9pm



David Hancock, 'Untitled #2', Acrylic on Canvas, 2007

Edwin Aitken
Matthew Burrows
Simon Burton
Sarah Doyle
Steve Dutton/Steve Swindells
David Hancock
Thomas Helyar-Carwell
Barry Thompson
Cathy Ward
Isabel Young

When presenting an exhibition on the theme of faith, as an artist one has to consider what one believes in. Do we believe in the power of the representations of faith in art that have held us enthralled over centuries or is it the power of faith itself that draws an artist to make work? The 10 artists included in this exhibition all question the notions of faith and explore the theme in very different ways.

Some of the artists explore faith in terms of its relevance to the History of Art. Their work may reference a particular religious painting, symbol or object. Thomas Helyar-Cardwell considers how in a society that is increasingly losing its faith, what do these arcane signifiers become when confused or forgotten. These objects gain a new role in his paintings and banners, transforming these symbols into fresh iconography. Similarly David Hancock subverts masterpieces of religious art to make comments upon contemporary society. By working within the tradition of painting he manipulates this loaded genre continuing the discourse on painting's role within contemporary art.



Sarah Doyle, '100 Princes' (detail), Felt tip on Paper, 2003

Simon Burton's paintings are drawn from the pomp and ceremony of war that suggest the idea of a religious crusade. These works draw parallels to past and present conflict and well as include signifiers drawn from art history. Burton depicts a bewildered landscape of ruin where the decimated aftermath of a conflict of abstraction and figuration is expressed through his multi-layered surface. Isabel Young's paintings seek to question the traditional hierarchy of the animal kingdom with man at the pinnacle. She re-works this classification through the tradition of icon painting, placing animals in the role of a deity. The use of iridescent paint transmits this ethos by referencing the precious materials used in icon painting, and subsequently notions of importance, power, and status.

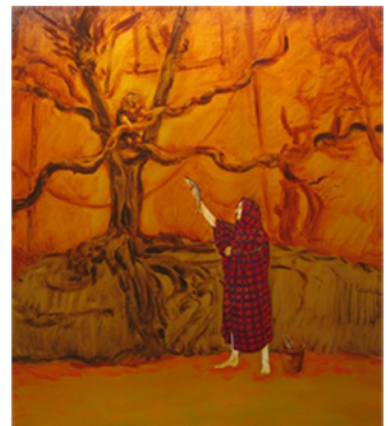
Other artists have chosen to discuss what we believe in today. Matthew Burrows' paintings explore what it means to believe, and in what context it is possible. He unpicks our expectation of science by developing a mythic view of evolution. Through this upended and regressive world Burrows highlights our assumptions that reason has the monopoly on truth and satirises the views of creationists. Edwin Aitken's paintings attempt to uncover an essential meaning or truth. Through his work he seeks a 'burden of proof' that will inevitably validate his own personal faith in painting as a means to express ideas that have an ongoing relevance. In contrast Cathy Ward's installations centre on a childhood incident that contributed in her subsequent loss of faith. Her contribution will be revisiting her departure, both as a reconstruction, and reviewing its many manifestations in her work. For Dutton and Swindells the matter of faith offers the opportunity to make work out of a number of positions simultaneously whilst still believing in all of them. Their videos and wall drawings reference William Friedkin's "The Exorcist" by paying particular attention to the use of inversion and reversal to denote evil. This collaging of disparate elements generates new dialogues for making art.

Both Barry Thompson and Sarah Doyle consider the roles of contemporary icons and whether they supplant the religious deities of the past. As we desperately try to retain some kind of faith by attaching it to our own heroes, we build our own identity around these superstars who inspire us. The fervour with which we aspire to these role models could also be considered religious, as in Doyle's work, where she focuses specifically on the phenomenon that is Prince. Thompson's paintings on the other hand suggest a nostalgic yearning towards adolescence. His paintings metaphorically instil a religious affect as 'Grunge' icons ascend his greenbelt wastelands as resurrected souls.

Each artist has tackled this theme in a unique and original way and the exhibition hopes to highlight the diversity of current contemporary practise.



Matthew Burrows, 'To those who have ears', Oil on Linen on Board, 2007



Isabel Young, 'The Exaltation of the Tamarin', Oil on Canvas, 2007