

FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

Carla Busuttil
Eileen Cooper RA
Kate Groobey
Grant Foster
Chantal Joffe RA
Missionary Mary Proctor
Dame Paula Rego
Benjamin Senior
Zadie Xa
Lynette Yiadom-Boakye

Curated by Marcelle Joseph

16TH JANUARY– 11TH FEBRUARY 2015

Additional Events:

Curator's Tour, Thursday 22nd January, 11 am

Artists in conversation with Sacha Craddock, Thursday, 29th January, 6:30 pm

Marcelle Joseph Projects and heike moras art are pleased to present *Figuratively Speaking*, an exhibition of artworks made by a group of largely London-based artists who use the human body as their inspiration and playing field. Exploring recent trends in figurative art, this exhibition will look at a particular strand of embodiment in contemporary art. Employing a more gestural or expressionistic style, these artists depict the human form using diverse approaches that question embodiment in our current post-Internet age. The “touched-up” photographic image ceases to play centre stage in these artists’ output and a different kind of “real-life” intimacy plays out when viewing the paintings and sculptures to be exhibited in this group show. The viewer’s physical empathy with these figures will be palpable, unlike the detachment encountered in today’s age of artificial intimacy experienced behind the screen of a computer or smart phone.

Artist Biographies:

Carla Busuttil (b.1982, Johannesburg) is a South African artist living and working outside Oxford whose work primarily revolves around the human form painted in an abstract contemporary style, using a painterly brushstroke, shape and the political landscape of a vibrantly coloured South Africa as opposed to fine detail. Growing up under apartheid, Busuttil uses imagery from magazines, newspapers and library archives as source material for her often politically and culturally-charged subject matter. Busuttil graduated with a BA in Fine Art, from the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (2001-2004) before completing a Postgraduate Diploma at Royal Academy Schools, London (2005-2008). Previous solo exhibitions include those at Space K, Seoul (2014), Goodman Gallery, Cape Town (2013), Josh Lilley Gallery, London (2013 and 2011), Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg (2012), and Gimpel Fils, London (2009). Recent group shows include: *It's All Video, Video, Video, The Bioscope*, Johannesburg (2014); *One Giant Leap: Works from the Saatchi Gallery*, Hyatt Regency, London (2012); *Saatchi in Adelaide: British Art Now*, Art Gallery of South Australia (2011); *Vicissitude*, Kabin Collection, London (2010); and *Newspeak: British Art Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London and Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia (2009-2010). She was the winner of the Jerwood Contemporary Painting Prize in 2009 and

the Deutsche Bank Pyramid Award in 2008. Artbook publisher Thames & Hudson has included Busuttill in their *100 Painters of Tomorrow* launched in September 2014. The chosen artists were selected from more than 4300 entrants, come from over 37 countries and the entries were judged by an international panel of prominent painters and curators including Cecily Brown, curators Tony Godfrey, Yuko Hasegawa and Gregor Muir, and writer-critics Suzanne Hudson, Barry Schwabsky and Philip Tinari.

Eileen Cooper RA (b.1953, Glossop near Manchester) is a London-based painter, printmaker and sculptor who employs a bold yet linear visual approach to explore playful, romantic and imaginative narratives involving women or couples and often featuring unexpected animals. Steeped in a distinctive expressionism, her highly personal style, executed with passion and tenderness, always reflects stages in her own life that readily associate with archetypal themes and mythologies. Cooper studied fine art at Goldsmith's College and Royal College of Art, London (1971 - 1977), where she also taught print-making. Cooper is one of the major British figurative artists who emerged in the 1980's with her first solo exhibition at the Air Gallery in London in 1979. Solo exhibitions include Castlefield Art Gallery, Manchester (1986), Artsite, Bath (1987), Benjamin Rhodes Gallery, London (1988/90/94), a touring show of graphics (1996 - 97) to Darlington, Harrogate and Scarborough Art Galleries, another national touring show with Art First (1999) and the Dulwich Picture Gallery (2000) after a two-year residency during which she worked with the collection. In 2001, she was elected Royal Academician and exhibits work in the annual Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art. In June 2004, Cooper made her first appearance in Scotland with a solo show of paintings, prints and drawings at the Glasgow Print Centre. She was represented by Art First from 1997 until 2013. In October 2011, Eileen Cooper became the first woman to be appointed an Officer of the Royal Academy since its inception in 1768. She took up her post as Keeper, which includes her role as Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools. Eileen Cooper has participated in significant national and international shows on British art including *The Image as Catalyst*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1984), *Conversations*, Arts Council Touring exhibition (1987), *The New British Painting*, Contemporary Arts Centre, Cincinnati and tour (1988), *Picturing People*, Arts Council exhibition touring to Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Singapore (1989) and *The Outsider: British Figuration Now*, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence (1990).

Grant Foster (b.1982, Worthing) is a London-based British artist whose work spans painting and sculpture and explores the themes of faith, redemption and revenge through the depiction of the child, a central motif in Foster's work. Positioning himself with a touch of humour between the uncompromising traditions of the past and the present day culture of profanity and questionable morality, Foster reconfigures tabloid newspaper photographs, children's illustration and advertising imagery into the codes of British Romantic portrait painting, depositing the often-depicted child into the tabloid culture of today. Foster completed a BA in Painting at the University of Brighton in 2004 before completing an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2010. Foster's work has been presented in solo exhibitions at Chandelier Projects, London (2014), Chinashop, Oxford (2013) and Post Box Gallery, London (2009). Recent group exhibitions include: *The Threadneedle Prize 2014: Figurative Art Today (Curated Space)* by Sacha Craddock, Mall Galleries, London (2014); *Rx for Viewing* (with Jesse Wine), Ana Cristea Gallery, New York (2014); *East London Painting Prize*, Strand House, London (2014); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, Spike Island, Bristol and ICA, London (2013); *Backwards Man*, CGP London (2012); *Memory of a Hope*, Ceri Hand Gallery, Liverpool (2011); *Between a Hole and a Home*, James Taylor Gallery, London (2010); *Dead Bodies and Cardboard*, Elevator Gallery, London (2008) and *Pathos to Ethos*, Eleven, London (2006).

Kate Groobey (b.1979, Leeds) is a British artist living in Paris whose expressive gestural approach to painting is quite physical, taking on a performative element. Because of their scale, her large paintings are made with the canvas positioned on the floor, forcing Groobey to literally traverse the canvas as she creates the image thereby replicating the movement of the contorted figures depicted within the canvas. Groobey's figures, distorted to near abstraction, are a mere suggestion of spontaneous marks within a ground of rich earthy colours and textured brushstrokes. Groobey completed a BFA at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art at the University of Oxford in 2000 and then went on to complete an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art, London in 2010. Recent group exhibitions include: *Temporary Show III*, Italy (2013), *I Did Did I*, ASC Gallery, London (2013), *O Malandro Goes To The Farm*, Spitalfields City Farm, London (2013), *Creekside Open 2013*, London (2013), *The Perfect Place To Grow: 175 Years of the Royal College of Art*, London (2012), *A Sense of Adventure*, The Pullman Hotel, London (2012), *Moments Around Us*, Whitechapel Idea Store, London (2012), *Making Waves: International Contemporary Art from the Saatchi Gallery*, Hyatt Regency, London (2012), *Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2011*, ICA, London and Site Gallery/ SI Artspace, Sheffield (2011), *Sight Insight*, Asylum Project Space, London (2011), *Newspeak: British Art Now Part II*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2010), *Mare*

Street Biennale 2010: Unfeasibility Study, Feltrooms, London (2010), *Animals, Contemporary visions*, Martini Arte Internazionale, Turin (2009), and the *Marmite Prize Show*, Studio I.I, London (2008).

Chantal Joffe RA (b.1969, St. Albans, Vermont) lives and works in London. Possessing a humorous eye for everyday awkwardness and an enlivening facility with paint, Joffe brings a combination of insight and integrity to the genre of figurative art. Hers is a deceptively casual brushstroke. Joffe's paintings only waveringly adhere to their photographic source, instead reminding us that distortions of the brush or pencil can often make a subject seem more real. Joffe questions assumptions about what makes a noble subject for art and challenges what our expectations of a feminist art might be. She ennobles the people she paints by rehabilitating the photographic image but, crucially, recognises that it is paint itself rather than attendant sociopolitical ideas that gives her paintings complexity and keeps us looking. She holds an MA from the Royal College of Art and a BA from Glasgow School of Art and was awarded the Royal Academy Wollaston Prize in 2006. Joffe has exhibited nationally and internationally at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2014 - 2015); Saatchi Gallery, London (2013 - 2014); MODEM, Hungary (2012); Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow (2012); Victoria Miro (2011, 2008, 2005, 2003 and 2000, all solo); Il Capricorno, Venice (2011, solo); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2011); Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York (2009); University of the Arts, London (2007); MIMA Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (2007); Royal Academy of Arts, London (2005); Galleri KB, Oslo (2005) and Bloomberg Space, London (2004). She has upcoming solo exhibitions in 2015 at Cheim & Read, New York, Jewish Museum, New York and Jerwood Gallery, Hastings. She was elected a Royal Academician in 2013.

Missionary Mary Proctor (born 1960 in Florida) is an American folk or outsider artist based in Florida. She was raised by her maternal grandparents who instilled in her the importance of religion. Mary had been running a junk and odds and ends store in rural northern Florida when she suddenly turned to making art in 1995 after her aunt and two other family members were killed in a fire, trapped inside their burning house trailer. Firefighters failed in all attempts to pry open the swelled metal doors. Mary says that God then spoke to her, telling her to 'paint the doors.' Renaming herself 'Missionary Mary Proctor' and her junkyard the 'American Folk Art Museum,' she started to paint doors covered with her spiritual teachings and observances of righteous behavior garnered from everyday life and, especially, from her wise Grandma. Her doors range from cabinet size to large double garage doors on which Mary typically uses paint and a collage of buttons, paintbrushes, cloth and other found objects. Mary likes to think of herself as a missionary rather than an artist. "I'm just a messenger and they (the people who collect her work) are the deliverers." Her work has been featured in exhibitions at or has been commissioned by the American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore, MD (1998-99); Coca Cola Corporation, Atlanta, GA; House of Blues, New Orleans, LA, Orlando, FL and Chicago, IL; Zora Neale Hurston Museum, Eatonville, FL (1997); Tricia Collins Grand Salon, New York, NY (1996); and Mennello Museum of American Folk Art, Orlando, FL. Her work has been written about in a feature story in *Raw Vision* (No. 29, Winter 1999) and in the *New York Times* (4th April 2004) and the *Smithsonian*.

Dame Paula Rego (b.1935, Lisbon) is a Portuguese artist living in London and one of Europe's most sought after artists with a powerful original female voice. A painter of 'stories', her characters enact a variety of roles and depict disquieting tensions below the surface. Her work, large pastel paintings and sharply drawn etchings, express an extraordinary range of emotions and experiences and always have a sense of a magic realism pointing to an underlying psychology and sexuality as seen through a feminine viewpoint. She was educated at St Julians School of Carcavelos, Portugal (1945-1951), and then went on to further her studies at the Slade School of Fine Art in London (1952-1956). Later into her career, she received an Honorary Doctorate of Letters at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland (1999), which was the first of many received at other institutions, such as the University of Oxford (2000), Roehampton University (2002), and the Rhode Island School of Design (2005). Recent solo exhibitions include those at Marlborough Fine Art, London (2014, 2007 and 2006 among others), Galerie Sophie Scheidecker, Paris (2012), Marlborough Chelsea, New York (2008), Galeria III, Brito, Portugal (2002), and Edinburgh Printmakers Workshop, Edinburgh (2000). Important group exhibitions include: *Fairy Tales, Monsters, and the Genetic Imagination*, Frist Center for the Visual Arts, Nashville, Tennessee (2012); *Material Matters: The Power of Medium*, Courtauld Institute of Art, London (2012); *Fantasy and Fairy Tales*, Museum of Art, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana (2009); *La feminidad en el arte*, Sala Bancaja San Miguel, Castellon, Spain (2008); *Only Make Believe*, Compton Verney, Warwickshire (2005); *Guys'n'Dolls. Art, Science, Fashion and Relationships*, Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, Brighton (2003); *British Art Show 5*, Hayward Gallery, London (2001); *Encounters: New Art from Old*, National Gallery, London (2000).

Benjamin Senior (b.1982, UK) is a London-based British artist whose work typically depicts women engaged in sport or exercise or studies of the female figure created in the studio from a live model. Senior's

paintings are nuanced by everyday observations, yet amplify the numeric and geometric nature of our everyday perception. By placing an emphasis on observational drawing rather than photography as the preparation for painting, it is with minute precision and an often voyeuristic approach that he explores the implications of the body when fixed within a flattened space. After receiving a BA in Painting from the Wimbledon School of Art in 2004, Senior completed his Masters of Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2010. Previous solo exhibitions include those at James Fuentes LLC, New York (2014 and 2013), Studio Voltaire, London (2013), *Ella Kruglyanskaya and Benjamin Senior*, James Fuentes LLC, New York (2011), and Boltelang, Zurich (2012), as well as an up-coming solo show in Dubai at Grey Noise and at Boltelang in Zurich (both in 2015). Previous group shows also include: *Suspicion* (curated by Dan Coombs), Jerwood Space, London (2014); *Counterpoise*, Kingsgate Gallery, London (2012); *Charlie Sierra Lima*, Charlie Smith, London (2011); *This is Tomorrow*, Annarumma 404, Naples, Italy (2011); *The Future Can Wait*, Shoreditch Town Hall, London (2010); *Fade Away*, Transition Gallery, London (2010); *Marmite Prize for Painting*, Studio 1.1, London (2008); and *Emergency 3* Aspex, Portsmouth (2007). In 2010, Senior won the Gordon Luton Prize for Painting.

Zadie Xa (b.1983, Vancouver) is a London-based Canadian artist whose work explores identity, desire and personal fantasy and encompasses painting, sculpture and installation. She completed an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London (2014) and a BFA from Emily Carr University, Vancouver, Canada (2007). Previous shows include: *Inoperative Mythology*, Blyth Gallery, Imperial College, London (2014); *Premio Ibercaja Pintura Joven 2010*, Centro Cultural Ibercaja Guadalajara, Centro Cultural Ibercaja Huesca, Museo Camon Aznar, Zaragoza, Spain (2011) and Fundación Fran Daurel de Barcelona, Museo Maeztu de Estella, Navarra, Spain (2010); and *My Skin is Dark but My Heart is White* (solo), La Fresh Gallery, Madrid, Spain (2010).

Lynette Yiadom-Boakye (b.1977, London) is a London-based artist of Ghanaian descent who makes oil paintings of fictional figures, self-described as 'suggestions of people' that 'don't share our concerns or anxieties', that display a contemporary and political visual within an open, unfixed narrative. She previously studied at Central St Martins, London (1996-1997), Falmouth College of Art (1997-2000) and Royal Academy Schools (2000-2003). Recent solo exhibitions include those at Yale School of Art, Connecticut (2014), Jack Shainman Gallery, New York (2014, 2012 and 2010), Corvi-Mora, London (2013 and 2011), Chisenhale Gallery, London (2012), Studio Museum Harlem, New York (2010), Stevenson, Cape Town (2010 and 2009), and Gasworks, London (2007). Selected group exhibitions include: *MIRRORCITY: London artists on fiction and reality*, Hayward Gallery, London (2014); *More Material*, Salon 94 Bowery, New York (2014); *Turner Prize*, Ebrington, Derry - Londonderry (2013); *The Encyclopedic Palace*, 55th Venice Biennale, Venice (2013); *The Ungovernables: New Museum 2012 Triennial*, New Museum, New York (2012); *Secret Societies*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Frankfurt (2011); *Newspeak: British Art Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2010); 7th Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2008); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, Coach Shed, Liverpool and Barbican Centre, London (2005) and *John Moores 23*, Liverpool (2004). Yiadom-Boakye was the 2012 recipient of the Pinchuk Foundation Future Generation Prize, which was accompanied by a solo exhibition of her work. She was short-listed for the 2013 Turner Prize and Prestel published a monograph of her work in 2014.

Notes to Editors:

heike moras art aims to bring emerging and established artistic talent to London. Located in a private townhouse, heike moras art offers an intimate and personal viewing experience away from the white-box format of conventional art galleries. The programme is comprised of exceptional contemporary art in a variety of media that reflects the scope and diversity of the global artistic community. It is dedicated to the conversation between the established and the experimental. Heike Moras advises international collectors on establishing and maintaining contemporary art collections. Her previous employment with a private art dealer has provided her with a keen understanding of the contemporary art world.

Marcelle Joseph is an independent curator and author based in London. As the director of Marcelle Joseph Projects, a nomadic curatorial platform founded in 2011, she has produced and curated an impressive oeuvre of exhibitions at a variety of locations from the Gallery Café at the Royal Academy of Arts, London to pop-up galleries in the East End of London and project spaces in Istanbul and Athens. Since 2011, Marcelle has also been the in-house curator at Great Fosters, the former royal hunting lodge of King Henry VIII in Egham, Surrey, where she has curated six shows in the house and grounds of this magnificent, historic Grade I-listed property that dates back to 1550. Marcelle is also the executive editor of *Korean Art: The Power of Now*

(Thames & Hudson, 2013), a survey of Korean contemporary art showcasing 120 artists, museum and gallery directors, curators and collectors from Korea.