

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

Jan Worst, *Illuminations*

3rd February-10th April 2010; Preview 2nd February 2010 6 – 8 pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts is proud to host the first UK exhibition of work by Dutch artist Jan Worst. Running from February 3rd to April 10th 2010 (Private View on February 2nd: 6.00-8.00 pm), this will be a unique opportunity for the viewers to immerse themselves in the artist's rich and multilayered universe.

An extremely meticulous painter, Jan Worst paints very few paintings a year, making this an extremely ambitious project in its scale, with a total of eight works included in the exhibition. He produces collage-like paintings where collected cut outs from various magazines are carefully transferred onto the canvas to create film-noire like film stills.

The Artist and His Work

Born in Hereenveen in 1953, Jan Worst has dedicated his artistic career to the exploration of the infinite possibilities of paint. Incredibly rich, layered and complex, his stunning large-scale canvases can seem at first depictions of the interiors of palaces and residences, glossy renditions of an equally glossy milieu. Worst's paintings are rich in colours with infinite details and present the tactility of tapestry from past centuries.

His paintings upon close examination reveal a significantly disquieting and multi-layered series of undertones, with languorous young women and wide-eyed children inhabiting incongruously these otherwise "perfect" spaces. The viewer becomes trapped as voyeur as he stumbles across these meticulously staged scenes in elaborate settings. These scenes are set in stately European homes full of aristocratic tradition. Through his virtuoso use of paint, Worst creates an almost photographic image, making the juxtaposition between space and inhabitant all the more intriguing.

The gap between photography, as a dominant contemporary medium and tapestry as a defunct ancient one, is bridged by Worst by means of painting. Painting existed before tapestry was invented and continues to exist long after tapestry faded, and likewise painting continued unabated after the rise of photography and perhaps, dare whisper it, may remain after its demise as an artistic medium.

In a work such as *Late Lives* Worst pays homage to that long-standing trope of Dutch Golden Age art, paintings-within-paintings, one which is always satisfying just in itself. But as always Worst's tweaked version of tradition ends up being more subversive and paradoxical than reassuring. Are these portraits related to the humans amongst them, are they relatives, enemies, or both, has the wealth that they were presumably partly responsible for in their time now been usurped and misplaced, or are they just anonymous portraits from some decorator? Worst relishes the technical challenge of such paintings-in-paintings just as he adores that repeated display of perspectival depth which is one of his signature devices.

For further details please contact: Benedetta Ghione on +44 (0)207 734 8888 or benedetta@benbrownfinearts.com

21 CORK STREET FIRST FLOOR LONDON W1S 3LZ **AND** 12 BROOK'S MEWS LONDON W1K 4DG
T+44 (0)20 7734 8888 INFO@BENBROWNFINEARTS.COM F+44 (0)20 7734 8892 WWW.BENBROWNFINEARTS.COM

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS

One person exhibitions

- 1987 Pictura, Groningen
1988 Galerie Frontaal, Appingedam
1989 Galerie Apunto, Amsterdam
1991 "Jan Worst, schilderijen 1988/1991," Instituut voor Kunst-, Architectuurgeschiedenis en Archeologie, Groningen
1992 "Die Aktualität des Schönen," Galerie Christian Gögger, München
1993 "Jan Worst, schilderijen," Museum Willem van Haren, Heerenveen
1994 Galerie Christian Gögger, München
1995 "Interiors," Torch Gallery, Amsterdam
1996 Galerie Edition Voges + Deisen, Frankfurt am Main
1997 Galerie Christian Gögger, München
1998 "Primal Scenes," Torch Gallery, Amsterdam
"Good Looking," Gasunie galerij, Groningen
"Good Looking," Kunstverein Ulm
1999 Torch Gallery, Amsterdam
2000 Galleria Cardi, Milano
2001 Kunstverein Hochrhein e.V., Bad Säckingen
2002 Torch Gallery, Amsterdam
Gian Enzo Sperone, Roma
2004 Sperone Westwater, New York
2010 Ben Brown Fine Arts, London

bibliography

- Olbricht, Thomas. "Rockers Island from the Olbricht Collection," Germany: Steidl/Folkwang Museum, 2007.
Dannatt, Adrian. Jan Worst: Paintings 1988–2008. New York: Sperone Westwater, 2007.
Rapp, Jürgen. "Übergangscharakter." Kunstforum Bd. 191, May–July 2008: p. 73.
Engelen, Mart. "All that's Fair." # 59 Magazine, No 1/09, p. 11.