

GEORGE CONDO

7th February – 21st April 2007

Following a controversial reception of the *Dreams and Nightmare of the Queen*, currently on display in the Wrong Gallery at Tate Modern, George Condo has delivered a new body of work that includes painting and sculpture for his forthcoming exhibition at Simon Lee Gallery.

The hybridizing nature of his portraits takes a fascinating turn in these latest works. The artist fuses cartoon figures, human forms and “antipodal beings” into a state of metamorphosis, where each of these figures simultaneously reflect a plethora of emotions and gestures, such as, wonder, chaos, deceit, a scream and a laugh within a single expression. Art Historian Donald Kuspit once described Condo’s composite portraits as “metaphysical mannequins”, and works in this exhibition such as *Deconstructed Female Portrait*, *The Smiling Sea Captain* and *The Actor* fit perfectly into this description. The nude is once again in full frontal exposure as if the *Demoiselles d’Avignon* had been filtered through the pages of a comic book and further re-positioned for a fashion shoot in the *Tan Nude and Metamorphosis*.

Condo has become increasingly well-known as a painter who also sculpts. The link between painting and sculpture is particularly apparent when we look at early jeweled paintings by the artist such as the *Cloudmaker* from 1984 where Condo spelt out his own name in gold, rubies and sapphires. Condo’s leap into three dimensions occurred in 1999 when he produced a jeweled object embellished with rubies, diamonds, and pearls, entitled *Desireah*, shown for the very first time in this exhibition. With this work Condo has turned the idea of an object that promises splendor and beauty into a scatological masquerade.

The artist emerged in the 80’s right in the centre of the vibrant and innovative art scene of New York. Since then George Condo has been extensively occupied with investigating and challenging the genre of portraiture, at times taking his inspiration from American caricature, European history portraits as well as Greek mythological figures, in his dark yet humorous signature style. As a result, the artist has produced a comprehensive body of work, ranging from large bronze sculptures to his series of imaginary portraits, religious paintings and pod people.

George Condo was born in 1957 in Concord, New Hampshire. He has exhibited extensively in both United States and in Europe including exhibitions at The Whitney Museum, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, The Guggenheim, New York, Albright Knox Museum, Buffalo, Fonds National d’Art Contemporain, Salzburg, Ministère de la Culture, Paris, Museu d’Art Contemporani, Barcelona, The Museum of Fine Art, Houston, the Kunsthalle Bielefeld in Germany and most recently at the Wrong Gallery in Tate Modern, London.

A full colour catalogue of the exhibition will be available from March 2007.

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