

# HAYHILLGALLERY

MASTER WORKS AND CONTEMPORARY ART

35 Baker Street, London W1U 8EN

## PRESS RELEASE



### **Peter Blum: At Eye Level**

1<sup>st</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> June 2015

*'My new solo exhibition at the Hay Hill Gallery is entitled "At Eye Level", as this title is a precise expression of what I perceive and attempt to illustrate through my painting: my models are not smarter, better or taller than the people observing them, and they have not been treated with kid gloves, as in the case with the majority of images that we deal with today, regardless of medium.*

*My pictures are realistic in the radical sense of the word, without the models being exposed in the process. Quite the opposite: they confidently allow themselves to be observed. In other words, they are at eye level with the people who are looking at them.*

*With this attitude they furnish a topic for debate, consequently involving themselves in the social discourse regarding artificial and natural beauty and the construction of an image. It is a highly-topical subject and a key question that concerns the self-conception of all of us. My pictures contribute to the clarification of this issue, making them very much of their time.*

*"At Eye Level" also represents the feelings that I have as a painter towards art history. I require no computer technology or internet in the creation of my "images", in the way of the Old Masters, I paint onto canvas, eschewing the alleged necessities of modern-day art production and in spite of - or perhaps because of - this I have something of relevance to say, something that will not be obsolete by tomorrow.*

*Last but not least, "At Eye Level" also describes the Hay Hill Gallery, which, at the heart of one of the most significant art metropolises in the world, maintains eye level with the hot spots of the art scene.' - Peter Henryk Blum*

Hay Hill Gallery is proud to be presenting the new exhibition of work by Peter Blum, one of the most exciting German figurative artists of his generation. Using the Old Masters techniques of layer and glaze painting, his scenes are muted, selective with colour, like silent film reels and tinted sepia prints. Players are staged in ironically self-conscious poses where the melancholia of sad harlequins and heavily made up women is reminiscent of physical theatre.

Gentle diffusions of light are met by the devilishly sharp details of Blum's technical brilliance. The unreality of the real world with its desires, alienation, loneliness and illusion is presented in Blum's deeply lyrical style as he steers us away from the rational subjective self into the strength of the collective. His characters are heartbreakingly earnest in their wordless attempts to communicate with us, and these mimes verge on Theatre of the Absurd, much like the Orator's indecipherable speaker in Ionesco's play *The Chairs*.

A clownish figure recurs in Blum's latest works, chalk faced with pencilled in eyebrows and shaven head. Masked by a rubbery red nose on elastic and black-rimmed eyes, he is playing a part. His gestural quality is reminiscent of Brechtian theories, the hunch of his posture and reach of his hands expressive as any spoken word. He could be playing *Baal* who 'started out as a cabaret performer and poet. Then a merry-go-round owner, woodcutter, millionairess' lover, jailbird and pimp'.

The meta-theatricality of Blum's work confronts us with the contradictions of humanity. Wearing shades, we long to hide away but to also be adored, to 'know fully, even as we are fully known'. Light hearted or darkly surreal, the works are unsettling, stirring up feelings of being at odds with things- even as everything else is odd. To reach wholeness, we must look through the masks and costumes, remaining open-hearted with each other. Blum's staging of each character remains strange because it is clear they are not alone in their secret rituals. Struck dumb, there is someone watching in the wings - and that person turns out to be you.

*Ends*

**Peter Henryk Blum** was born in 1964 and seen as an artistic prodigy from an early age.

His uncle, founder of the avant-garde 'EL' gallery in Poland, recognised and encouraged this burgeoning talent. The obsessive determination with which Blum picked up the techniques and compositions of da Vinci and Caravaggio led to his first professional exhibition- at just fourteen years old.

At the Academy of Fine Art in Kassel, Blum studied under Prof. Kurt Haug, advocate of North German Realism and member of the Zebra group. Although Blum was the youngest assistant in the academy's history, he already had by far the most experience. Graduating with distinction in 1991, he gained the sought-after scholarship awarded by the district gallery of Fulda, the "Kunststation Kleinsassen", where he lived from 1991-94 before finally settling in the Rhön region.

Blum is already to be found in reference books having put on over 110 exhibitions all over the world. His work has been shown in prestigious locations such as the Vienna Künstlerhaus in

Austria; the European Parliament in Brussels, the National Museum of Art in Cluj-Napoca, as well as in Japan and the USA. London's renowned Hay Hill Gallery has represented Peter Blum since 2012.

### **Selected Exhibitions**

2014 Hay Hill Gallery, London  
2013 Vonderau Museum Fulda  
2012 House Bere, London  
2011 Bank Schilling, Wiesbaden  
2010 Ravenborg, Hamburg  
2009 Ritzebuettel Castle, Cuxhaven  
2008/10 Pilsterhof Bad Brueckenau  
2007 CCS Gallery, Suhl  
2005 Artwork Gallery, Speyer  
2005 Music Academy of the Land of Hessen, Schlitz  
2004 Kunsthalle Gießen  
2001 Museum of the City of Bad Hersfeld, Kapitelsaal  
1996 Woeller & Paquet Gallery, Frankfurt  
1994, City Gallery ada, Meiningen  
1992 National Museum of Fine Arts, Cluj-Napoca  
1991 Bollhagen Gallery, Worpswede  
1979/89/91/94/98 Kunststation Kleinsassen

**Notes to Editors:** Hay Hill Gallery, located on Baker Street, represents a number of internationally recognised contemporary artists. The exhibition will be held alongside a sculpture collection which features works by Eleanor Cardozo, Richard Minns, Palolo Valdés, Andy Cheese, Ian Edwards, Nicola Godden, Jamie McCartney, Gianfranco Meggiato, A.&M. Cacchiarelli Principi, Anne Tanner, David Mayer, Roland Piché, Sam Shendi and Ruurd Hallema.

**For press information and images please contact [info@hayhillgallery.com](mailto:info@hayhillgallery.com)**

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