

CHARLIE SMITH london Ltd.

336 Old Street
London EC1V 9DR
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 7193 6017
direct@charliesmithlondon.com
www.charliesmithlondon.com

Wed-Sat 11am-6pm or by appointment

PRESS RELEASE

John Stark

Meliora Silentio

Private View

Thursday October 1st 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Exhibition Dates

Friday October 2nd – Saturday October 31st 2009

Gallery Hours

Wednesday – Saturday 11am – 6pm or by appointment

CHARLIE SMITH london is delighted to present John Stark with his first one person show in London, 'Meliora Silentio'. The exhibition is also CHARLIE SMITH london's inaugural show at our new Old Street gallery space.

'Aut tace aut loquere meliora silentio', reads the Latin epigram in Salvator Rosa's self portrait of circa 1645. Translated as *'Be quiet, unless your speech be better than silence'*, the Italian painter appears to deride the noise of the modern world, and in this opening exhibition Stark presents a collection of paintings that echo Rosa's sentiments. Rather than attempting to represent the incessant flux and simultaneity of the contemporary, Stark retreats to the vaults of ancient rites, myth and legend with the belief that the past holds the key to the future and that history eternally repeats itself.

Similarly, Friedrich Nietzsche's doctrine 'Eternal Recurrence' suggests that where time is infinite and evolution is cyclical, an infinity has already elapsed with every possible state, change and combination of energy having already taken place. And from Nietzsche by way of alchemy to Jungian analytic psychology, Stark's alluring paintings inhabit a place between end and beginning, where beneath their jewel like surfaces lie moments of stillness and silence.

This new series of paintings employ symbolic, ritualistic and mythical archetypes that originate in a place outside of our everyday experience. As fixed points in time and space the paintings operate as gateways to a place where the viewer is invited to contemplate the nature of existence, spirituality and death. By embracing content present in religion and mythology that in turn relates to that of fantasy, dream and delirium, Stark alludes to the universal collective unconscious in pursuit of individuation or selfhood. Just as the alchemist transmutes base metal into gold through the 'Opus Magnum', paint becomes philosophical gold in the hand of the artist; and similarly, alchemist and artist become subject and object of their own work.

Please contact gallery for images and further information

Biographical:

Born: 1979

Education: MA in Fine Art, Royal Academy Schools, 2001 – 2004; BA (Hons) in Fine Art (First Class), University of West England, 1998 - 2001

Selected Exhibitions: Romance Derived (thecentre:MK Annual Painting Prize), thecentre:mk, Milton Keynes, 2009; Saxon, Schwartz Projects, London, 2009; Strange Days and Some Flowers, Storey Gallery, Lancaster, 2009; New London School, Galerie Schuster, Berlin, 2009; The Sovereign European Art Prize, Somerset House, London, 2008; The Future Can Wait, Old Truman Brewery, London, 2007 & 2008; The Past is History, Changing Role Gallery, Naples, 2008; New London School, Mark Moore Gallery, LA, 2008; Eau Savage II, Fieldgate Gallery, London, 2007; Kaminzimmer, Grieder Contemporary, Zurich, 2006;

Selected Awards & Residencies: Arts Council Exhibition Award for 'Altered Beast', London, 2006; Arts Council Exhibition Participation Award, 2005; Royal Academy Schools & Loughborough University School of Art and Design Artist's Residency & Teaching Fellowship, 2004-2005; Royal Academy Schools Rome Travel Bursary, 2004; Premiums Award - The Victoria Levin Fund, 2003

Collections: David Roberts, London; private collections in Finland, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States



