

HAUSER & WIRTH

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Press Release

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'ANJ SMITH: GEOMETRY OF BLISS' TO LAUNCH FALL SEASON AT HAUSER & WIRTH NEW YORK

Hauser & Wirth New York

September 7 – October 2, 2010

Opening: Tuesday, September 7, 6 – 8 PM

New York, NY...No larger than an envelope and as lapidary as an 11th century Persian miniature, Anj Smith's painting 'R.' depicts a close friend of the artist as a 21st century Mona Lisa. An enigmatic figure stares out from the folds of an exquisitely rendered couture creation of tulle and fur, a leather bustier, and a Liberty print wrap. Behind her, a strip of daylight outlines the sea beyond distant hills. But as the details of this picture accrue, so do its contradictions. R's golden curls are in fact facial whiskers; her silks are decaying; her collar contains clinging rodents; and the landscape around her is dissolving into abstraction, bisected by a jagged white tear. Neither woman nor man, R. is instead a person suspended in transition from one gender to another just as the hour of her day hovers ambiguously between dawn and dusk. She embodies what Anj Smith describes as 'the anxiety of existing in a climate where nothing is stable, everything is profoundly uncertain, with gender boundaries constituting just one of the many lost structures of the times in which we're living.'



On September 7th, 'R.' and 13 other new paintings by Anj Smith will go on view in 'Geometry of Bliss' at Hauser & Wirth New York. The exhibition, which launches the gallery's autumn season, will remain on view through October 2nd.

Rapture and regression are Anj Smith's subjects. In her extravagantly detailed magic realism, apocalyptic landscapes, mysterious female figures, fashionable finery, and wittily rendered creatures are used to investigate the possibility of a contemporary sublime – an experience that, contrary to the tenets of 19th century

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Romanticism, can no longer be located in nature. Drawing upon sources as disparate as 17th century Dutch vanitas paintings, the works of Lucas Cranach, and the couture of Chanel and Comme des Garçons, Smith weaves archaic traditions and contemporary symbols together into a personal cosmology.

The paintings in 'Geometry of Bliss' explore issues of identity, eroticism, horror, mortality, and the collisions of these things in our increasingly fragile and uncertain world. In the three portraits 'Reconstructor,' 'The Combatant' and 'R.,' composite proxies smile faintly at the viewer from within the landscape; they wear Philip Treacy hats or cowboy boots, and bleed from self-inflicted cuts that trace the vine and flower patterns of fancy textiles. With the majority of her new paintings, however, Smith forgoes the human figure to signal 'a mere presence' through detritus that has been left behind. In 'Lost Patteran' (patteran is an archaic word for the improvised signs Medieval travelers would leave for one another, using crossed twigs and other found natural objects to send coded messages about things that lay ahead), a swath of disintegrating, prettily patterned luxury fabric hangs from branches placed atop a dripping, excremental hill.

'I see my work as partly being a comment upon the delight and materiality of painting as well as the limits of being an artist in general,' Smith has written. 'I try to convey both the clumsy pointlessness of painting as a means of representation, and the inaccessibility of the heavens, while making an object that contradicts both these things. One of the things I find deeply satisfying about painting is that by using different

languages, portals of contrasting logic can pop up unexpectedly at any time. As long as they resonate with the conceptual intentions of the work, I let them in.'

About the Artist

Born in 1978 in Kent, England, Anj Smith studied at Slade School of Fine Art and at Goldsmiths College in London. She currently lives and works in London. Smith's work has been exhibited at Knoxville Museum of Art in Tennessee, the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill, New York, and The Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art in Sunderland, England, among other museums and galleries in Europe and the United States. In 2006, Smith was short-listed for the MaxMara Award for Women at Whitechapel Art Gallery in London.



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About Hauser & Wirth

Hauser & Wirth is a global enterprise, founded in Zürich in 1992 by Iwan and Manuela Wirth and Ursula Hauser. Since 1996 the gallery has been located in the former Löwenbräu brewery building, along with other contemporary art galleries, the Kunsthalle Zürich, and the Migros Museum.

In 2003, Hauser & Wirth opened Hauser & Wirth London on Piccadilly in an historic building designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, adding a new and energetic dimension to London's growing importance as an international art center.



In 2006, Hauser & Wirth at Colnaghi was created on London's Old Bond Street. Hauser & Wirth New York opened to the public on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in September 2009. In October 2010, the gallery will open a new London space on Savile Row.

Hauser & Wirth New York is open to visitors Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am until 6 pm. The general public can find additional information about the gallery, its exhibitions and programs online at: www.hauserwirth.com.

For additional press information or to obtain images for publication, please contact hwny@andreaschwan.com.

Forthcoming Exhibitions:

Dieter Roth

October 6 – October 30, 2010

Monika Sosnowska

November 4 – December 18, 2010

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R.
2010
Oil on linen
41.9 x 37.5 cm / 16 1/2 x 14 3/4 in
© Anj Smith
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, New York and
Ibid Projects, London
Photo: Alex Delfanne

Lost Patteran
2010
Oil on linen
18 x 24.8 cm / 7 1/8 x 9 3/4 in
© Anj Smith
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, New York and
Ibid Projects, London
Photo: Alex Delfanne

The Combatant
2010
Oil on linen
54 x 43.7 cm / 21 1/4 x 17 1/4 in
© Anj Smith
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, New York and
Ibid Projects, London
Photo: Alex Delfanne

Portrait Of Landscapes
2010
Oil on linen
25.3 x 32.5 cm / 10 x 12 3/4 in
© Anj Smith
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, New York and
Ibid Projects, London
Photo: Alex Delfanne

Signs Made At Night
2010
Oil on linen
14 x 19 cm / 5 1/2 x 7 1/2 in
© Anj Smith
Courtesy Hauser & Wirth, New York and
Ibid Projects, London
Photo: Alex Delfanne