

PRESS RELEASE

ANDY HOPE 1930 PHANTOM GALLERY

26 January – 8 March 2008

The exhibition opens simultaneously in Zürich and Los Angeles:

Zürich: 26 January, 8 – 10pm

Los Angeles, 7556 Sunset Blvd: 26 January, 11am – 6pm

Andy Hope 1930 creates independent, highly complex visual worlds: hybrids of figures, signs, landscapes and scripts of varied and apparently unconnected origins which he describes as being “completely clean of art”. His knowing defiance of the didactic in his appropriation of imagery sees comic superheroes and archvillains, generic political figures and symbols and icons of film and literary history – never from the artworld – coexisting in realms that are difficult to place and read, and remarkably free of nostalgia.

Agile appropriation and reinvention of existing locations are at the heart of Andy Hope's exhibition practice. His shows are often set in spaces unassociated with any context of art presentation: rooms and abodes that are either still occupied or marked by the histories of those who have previously dwelt or worked in them. Having lived next to a thrift store for a decade, for a piece named after its proprietor and made in 1996, c/o Puschmann, the artist moved much of its contents to a Munich art space where he had invited artists and friends to exhibit and sell their own objects. He transformed part of the Christine Mayer Gallery, also in Munich, into the Batman Gallery in 2004. This intimate reconfigured installation was augmented by a subtle, secondary work in the same building's abandoned attic. In October last year Hope hung 13 portraits of iconically beautiful but haunted women on the walls of a private apartment within an old, elegant Parisian residence, for his Sweet Troubled Souls show. Prior to hanging them, he stripped the apartment of all its large paintings, revealing layers of paint on patches of wall that told tales of previous inhabitants' changing predilections. The scars and marks of things past were also evoked by the women's visages, which, in a darkened home illuminated only by small lights attached to each frame, acquired a ghostly ambience.

Andy Hope's interest in spaces that have been lived in, and in the traces of former things once within them, are central to Phantom Gallery. His love of doubling spaces, of confusing and dismantling boundaries, has led to the decision to open and show this exhibition simultaneously in two cities, both venues interconnected by a live video conference. In Zurich and Los Angeles, visitors enter a room within a room, a gallery within the gallery. While in the latter the show appears as a gallery within a commercial stretch of street, a shop in the line of the storefronts on Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard, the exhibitions

themselves are, in contrast to the artist's visual world, unpopulated and empty. A former living space that seems palpably present is simultaneously, and quite obviously, recognizable as an artificial setting.