

Press release

Merlin James *Paintings*

27 November 2008 – 24 January 2009

Gallery open Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Mummery + Schnelle are pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Merlin James.

James's paintings are highly diverse: erotic figuration; land- sea- and skyscape; various conditions of abstraction; interior and exterior architecture; references and echoes from past art. His heterogeneity is not, however, the result of any conceptual project or pretext, and he has repeatedly affirmed the work's intuitive nature and underlying coherence as painting. The end – the picture – is what counts.

Recently described as a "post-avant-garde painting" James's work does not fit familiar institutional or art market frames. The exhibition at Mummery + Schnelle will again underline the difficult multiplicity of James' art, including for example a large equestrian portrait relating closely to Stubbs, and a series of black semi-abstract pictures that the artist has been working on intermittently since the 1980s.

These latter works develop elements that have been recurrent through his work, and that cannot be called either abstract or representational: a vertical, elongated oval extended from a shallow curving 'base' and/or suspended from a bowed 'ceiling', around and beyond which are diagonals, cut boughs, informal marks, flotillas of notation, buildings, circles, structures, clouds, apertures and entrances. Collage and cutting-out are frequent, and the physicality of the paintings is always paramount, James's paintings are not supports for an image, but tangible objects, the final form and meaning of which is reached by the putting on, and taking away, of paint. Each is its own physical world.

Merlin James was born in Cardiff in 1960. He graduated from the Central School of Art in 1982 and the Royal College of Art in 1986. He exhibits internationally and was one of the artists representing Wales at the 2007 Venice Biennale. As well as being a painter, James has written extensively on painting, and been involved with exhibitions of (among others) Giorgio Morandi, L. S. Lowry, Alex Katz and William Nicholson. **Concurrently with his own exhibition he has curated, in the viewing room at Mummery+Schnelle, a show of paintings and works on paper by the Franco-Russian artist Serge Charchoune (1889-1975).**

For all inquiries please contact Andrew Mummery (andrew@mummerschnelle.com), Wolfram Schnelle (wolfram@mummerschnelle.com) or visit www.mummerschnelle.com
Next exhibition at Mummery + Schnelle: **Runo Lagomarsino**, 5 February – 14 March 2009.