

EDEL ASSANTI

PAREIDOLIA

Ann-Marie James

Edel Assanti is pleased to present *Pareidolia*, an exhibition of new works by Ann-Marie James.

This body of work represents the most interdisciplinary survey of James' practice to date. The exhibition sees James reinvigorate the traditional medium of the oil sketch, evoking memories of the extravagant Baroque gestures of the Dutch old masters. The six birch ply panels specifically created for *Pareidolia* witness vibrant pools of colour flowing over sinuous limbs, intertwining in orgiastic contortions.

Encompassing James' entire practice to date is a passionate interest in the employment of found imagery. James' early video works appropriated footage from classical cinema, whereas her more recent drawing series, entitled *Limited Means*, focused on the reinterpretation of anatomical imagery from medical sources such as Gray's Anatomy. Building upon this motif, in *Pareidolia* James varnishes the once bare-boned skeletal forms of her previous series with an opulent coating of flesh and blood.

Her latest series of paintings and drawings canonise the compositional and figurative elements of celebrated art historical figures, including Rubens, Bernini, Manet and Rodin. *Prism*, 2010, portrays Manet's Olympia bearing down on the prostrate torso of The Laocoon. Whilst undeniably sensual, the arresting juxtaposition of anonymous limbs resonates more sinister undertones. The ensuing mêlée of biomorphic forms characterises James' exploration of contemporary art's continual desire to validate itself in a broader art historical context.

Ann-Marie James' visual exploration remains open-ended: *Pareidolia* simultaneously presents us with a critique and celebration of the art establishment's universal need for introspective self-affirmation.

Ann-Marie James lives and works in London. She completed her BA (Hons) in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design in 2004 and has since exhibited in France, Venezuela, Portugal and the United States. In 2006 she undertook a residency and solo exhibition with Lantana Projects in Memphis, Tennessee, and has most recently exhibited in the Westminster Open 2009 and The Mews Project Space, London.

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