

MAT COLLISHAW

URBAN LEGENDS

Private View: 28 June 5pm – 8pm

Exhibition: 29 June – 28 July 2018

Paul Stolper is pleased to announce 'Urban Legends', an exhibition of editions by Mat Collishaw, which highlights our insatiable appetite for visual stimulation, and our addiction to imagery. The show includes 'Gasconades', pigment and screenprints, each of which depicts a solitary bird whose stunning bright plumage is visually challenged by the equally bright urban graffiti'd walls that act as their backdrop. We will also exhibit a group of editions that have developed from Collishaw's wrap paintings, which, designed to look like modernist system paintings, all follow a very specific geometry, based on the patterns made by folds in a sheet of paper.

The 'Gasconades' are depictions of birds that have escaped from their rural landscape to live in cities, hoping to benefit from the food and warmth that urban environments provide. However, in these surroundings the colourful birds clash with the dynamic city landscape, flooded with advertising boards and spray-painted tags. They disappear in the optical arms race of advertising and promotion that they are also trying to exploit. "I chained them to the walls to indicate the helplessness in their bid to show off their bright feathers in order to attract a mate and procreate. Their colourful liveries are not there by choice, they are in bondage to the genetic program they have inherited. It reminded me of a quote from the English writer Kingsley Amis who, having lost his libido in later life said, "Thanks God for that, it was like being chained to an idiot for 50 years'." The brightly patterned feathers these birds are displaying, are clashing with the colours and shapes of the city they're now living in, they're suddenly in a much more competitive environment.

Translated literally as 'extravagant boasting', 'Gasconades' consists of seven prints of birds sitting, solitary, on rusty bent metal rods, striking a glum paradisiacal note. This is their contemporary paradise, a last desperate lunge at sexual attraction. Collishaw says, "I was trying to make work that had to do with this kind of impulse to advertise ourselves...in the case of graffiti, using dynamic shapes and colours to quickly ascribe your identity on the wall".

Where the 'Gasonades' quote the trompe l'oeil effect so evident in 'The Goldfinch', 1654, by Carel Fabritius, the wrap paintings, first exhibited in his show 'This is not an Exit', (Blain/Southern, London 2013) also highlight the deceptive nature of painting, featuring subtle painted undulations on canvas, utterly convincing as folds, and mimicking the lines made when folding a square of paper to form a wrap. Referring to the paintings Collishaw says "I started making them in the fallout of the 2008 market crash, when it became apparent that the grotesque binging we'd become accustomed to were no longer sustainable and we'd reached the bottom of the barrel." Where their design is reminiscent of Mondrian's achingly positive paintings, the printed images, sourced from advertising and magazines, another source of wrap paper, reflect the highly manufactured kaleidoscope of imagery we consume every day. Rather than creating depth on a flat surface using paint, the three editions, printed onto aluminium, 'Blue Moon', 'The Last Resort' and 'Dangerous Curves', are folded and then unfolded again, reminiscent of emptied out drug wrappings, the squalid remnants of indulgence and delusion.

Recent exhibitions include 'Standing Water', Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, 2018; 'Thresholds', Yapi Kredi Kultur, Istanbul, 2018; 'The Mask of Youth', Queen's House, Royal Museums, Greenwich, London, 2018; 'Albion' Gary Tatintsian Gallery, Moscow, 2018; 'Thresholds', Somerset House, London, 2017; 'The Centrifugal Soul', Blain|Southern London, 2017; 'Mat Collishaw', New Art Gallery Walsall, 2015. Collishaw was included in the seminal exhibitions 'Freeze', 1988 and 'Modern Medicine', 1990.

For further information, prices, and images, please contact rachel@paulstolper.com

Open

Mon – Fri 10am – 6pm
Sat 12pm – 6pm