

Attention Art Editors-
For September or October Issue

Simon Birch “Recent Works” at 10 Chancery Lane Gallery

September 23-October 23, 2004 Hong Kong-- 10 Chancery Lane Gallery is proud to present British painter Simon Birch. Birch is one of Hong Kong's rising stars in the art world whose popularity is sweeping Hong Kong at brush-fire speed by bringing an energized boldness to figurative painting and commissioned portraits.

A full time artist, Simon Birch, winner of this year's Manfred Schoeni Asian Art Award awarded by the Sovereign Group, is proving to be an artist to notice with numerous high profile commissions, critically acclaimed exhibitions, and remarkable exposure in local and international media. Indeed it is difficult not to notice Simon Birch if not only for his painting but his whole persona. You cannot miss him with his blonde wind-spiked hair, paint-splattered jeans and his cool stride with a bit of funk in his walk, no doubt due to his nights as a DJ under the pseudonym, Blackjack.

In this show of paintings, Simon Birch leads you into his realm of experimenting and pushing the boundaries of what one might think to be a classically-themed show of figurative painting. However, what surprises is the freshness of his brushstrokes. The energy and boldness of his portraits leave you envious to be the subject at hand. He immediately puts a seductive edginess into the figures he depicts and one hopes to be as cool as the people that Birch paints with such passion and intensity. He alternates in this show of experiments from heavy-textured large-scaled portraits to full length figures in movement. There is always that roughness and recklessness that binds his works into recognition as well as the absence of background details that might detract the viewer from the force that the subjects reveal. The faces of his paintings are confident and strong. They have a “don't mess with me” air to them. Birch comments on his work by stating, “I suppose portraiture and figurative work is interesting to me because it's such a direct and accessible subject in painting. People's faces and bodies are an immensely expressive subject, they inspire me and captivate the viewer. Like most people, I'm simply fascinated by people. We can't help but react when confronted with a strong portrait, maybe we see ourselves, something familiar, something we can relate to.”

Most recently Birch has returned from his first solo show in Singapore for the launching of the Old Parliament House Arts Centre, a new government-sponsored exhibition hall. He was also recently invited to join a prestigious UK group show alongside some of the hottest contemporary British artists, including Banksy, Jamie Hewlett, James Cauty and legendary New York collective; Faile. Birch additionally curated and produced a collaborative project with artists from different fields in Hong Kong such as graphic designer Stanley Wong, photographer Wing Shya and, Hong Kong icon, the King of Kowloon, which was displayed in Taikoo Shing, earlier in the year.

Born in Brighton in 1969, Birch began painting at a very early age under the guidance of his parents (his mother is an accomplished painter and art teacher). He has pursued a versatile career, which has included design, entertainment, music and sport, but he has continued to paint throughout his life. He has been a resident in Hong Kong since 1997.

**For interviews or inquiries please call Katie deTilly or Cleo Lam at 2810-0065 or email:
info@10Chancerylanegallery.com**

**Paintings by Simon Birch
Recent Works
Venue: 10 Chancey Lane Gallery,
10 Chancery Lane G/F, Central
September 23-October 23, 2004**