

DOMOBAAL

ANSEL KRUT / YAWA EKAT RO NI TAE / EAT IN OR TAKE AWAY

domo baal is very much looking forward to presenting Ansel Krut's fifth solo exhibition with the gallery, this autumn. This will be an opportunity to revisit some of the paintings first shown at the gallery 20 years ago together with newer work.

Ansel Krut: *"Twenty years ago I used to go for breakfast at a cafe on the Kingsland Road near my studio. It was used mostly by truck drivers and was always full of cigarette smoke. You could get: bacon, eggs, chips, 2 slices of toast and tea for £2.50. It always seemed to be raining and the passing traffic, which was incessant, sprayed up a fine polluted mist to knee height. Looking outwards from inside the cafe large letters saying "YAWA EKAT RO NI TAE" arched across the whole of the plate glass window at the front (this is "EAT IN OR TAKE AWAY" seen from behind). I was deliriously happy because I had a day of painting ahead of me.*

Some of the paintings I made at the time were first exhibited at domobaal gallery, and are the ones on show here, I'm keen to see how they look now; whether they have stood up. When I made them they looked like a wild departure from my previous work and they were met with opprobrium. But the seeds for their making were always there, just buried. I'd spent the previous 20 years trying to learn how to paint the appearance of things, mostly figures, but with limited success, because some of the hidden life of whatever I was trying to paint always wanted to burst through. So then, in my 40's, I felt I had to start to paint less about appearances and more from the inside out, the back to front-ness of stepping into the image and looking outwards.

Two more recent paintings, 'Faces on Noses' from 2019 and Expand-o from 2020 have been included to facilitate the conversation between now and then..

"Ansel Krut's extraordinary paintings take us back to 20th century existential angst and its unending inquiry into identity, fate, and self-determination. His painterly style may seem casual, crude, and ludic, but this is work of high seriousness and deep moral content."
(Alfred Mac Adam, The Brooklyn Rail, New York, May/June 2019)

"Amongst fearful iconographic contingencies, such a quietly composed technique quietly nudges the viewer towards the deeper pleasures of the engaged gaze: the compound act of looking, thinking, and translating from painterly matter that reminds us how we differ from animals, and how we might potentially differ more... Somewhere near the heart of this, one feels, is a generalised horror of instability – the possibility that anything is possible, any shift at any moment, even unto self-consumption – and an attempt to use painting, in all its remarkable mutability, as a method of both diagnosing and acclimating to that horror."
(Martin Herbert, from 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking' written for the pocket-book Hotel Vinegar, published by domobaal editions, to accompany Ansel Krut's solo exhibition, September 2006)

"By turns (and sometimes all at once), they are comical, mythical, scatological and ludic, and appear to have arisen from a ferment of intermingled sources: from the enchanted collective narratives of folklore, to the differently dark ruins of history, to the most trivial of everyday observations, and the flights of imagination that constantly punctuate conscious life. And so they arrive, given body in the messy brisk directness of the drawing process. We are put in mind of Goya's famous 'Sleep of Reason', and the monsters bred therein. But the disturbance is not only a question of imagery; it also arises at the level of material practice."

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(Ed Krčma, from 'Ansel Krut – sullyings and inversions and graphic impurity' an essay by Ed Krčma, written for 'Ghost Of A Flea' a solo exhibition and accompanying publication, at The Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon School of Art, September 2007)

"A human-insect hybrid whose expelled innards create psychedelic patterns, a Plasticine-silenced Mickey Mouse-eared demonic baby, a giant-mouthed creature whose teeth operate as a mincing plate into an oesophageal abyss. These are some of the characters you can expect to find in an Ansel Krut painting, while others stretch the capabilities of written description. Krut's works portray a world beyond the everyday comfort zone, where the social boundaries and academic theories upon which we base reality have been bent over and spanked, relativity and Darwinism abandoned in favour of a more fantastical view. The view is rarely pretty, but often funny and disturbing. Krut's dry wit and love of paint provide a welcome veneer between the viewer and a range of abject activities: a sweetshop window onto human perversity."

(Rebecca Geldard, from Ansel Krut: an essay by Rebecca Geldard, to accompany the exhibition 'Lie Still My Beating Heart...' at domobaal, London, May 2004)

"Krut's 'Whistling Winnie' is amazing in that its cartoonish, curiously composite figure comes across as being simultaneously animate and inanimate, and yet conveys real pathos... A word of caution: the work... is best appreciated in the flesh. It's substantially dependent on qualities of texture and touch that tend to get lost in reproduction, common though it is to encounter paintings in the form of mere images."

(Aidan Dunne, The Irish Times, 01.10.08, from a review of 'Precious Things' curated by Graham Crowley at the Highlanes, Drogheda, Ireland)

"Krut is open to letting his images stand as significant, meaning-inducing objects in their own right. Although they are representative and therefore readable as pictures their fluid form places them between fixed, unambiguous representation; certainly one can recognise heads, bodies, rooms, tools, vehicles, situations, but the precise meaning of the image is left for the viewer to extrapolate. There may be more than one meaning "inserted" into the work, or a given picture might well simply operate as a trigger for interpretation, setting up a scene on which the viewer must actively labour in order to come to an acceptable understanding of what is taking place. The standpoint adopted by Krut is one of investigation, of speculation as to what bringing together different pictorial forms might evokeThe very act of picturing is, by this method of expansion of colour and line, itself pictured. One is reminded of Sigmund Freud's dual notion of condensation and displacement, the two-part process employed in dreams wherein different images are brought together into a third novel form bearing features of both sources, and in which significant items are also displaced or translated into other, sometimes more acceptable entities."

(Peter Suchin, from 'In Wittgenstein's Game' written for the publication to accompany the exhibition 'Maybe a Duck... Maybe a Rabbit...' Ansel Krut, Jemima Burrill and Walter Swennen, at Wimbledon School of Art, curated by Ansel Krut, as part of the Drawing Fellowship 2005–2007)

"Krut demonstrates a Surrealist's facility for perceiving links between the most disparate commonplace objects and having them perform dual functions. It is by attending to the logic that an initial motif triggers, and allowing a character to reveal itself, that the artist arrives at, or discovers, a painting ... Nine years ago Krut abandoned a more illustrative style of figuration, executed in a sombre palette, and began working in the singular manner for which he is known today. With this newfound freedom, the artist's sense of colour and humour was allowed to surface. Indeed, Krut claims to now know when a painting is headed in the right direction when it makes him laugh."

(Andreas Leventis, Art Review Magazine, issue 38, January and February 2010)

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"The hybrid figures, part human, part animal and part object, perform cruel, ridiculous and crazy antics within the 'stage' of the prepared area ... In spite of their grotesque fluency, in a Goya-esque space between absurdity and moral commentary, each drawing is the subject of closest critical attention and processes of editing."

(The Primacy of Drawing by Professor Deanna Petherbridge, Yale University Press, 2009)



Box Head

oil on canvas, 70 x 60cm (27.6" x 23.6") 2006

"The anti-logic of the reversed perspective box is compounded by its absurd facial features. The eyes are borrowed in from a cartoon, the ears are mismatched, the mouth is free floating. The springy zig-zaggy line of the neck suggests that the whole ridiculous thing is just a jack-in-the-box with ideas above its station."

IN GALLERY: ANTI-CLOCKWISE FROM DOOR:



Self-Portrait in Bendy Balloons

oil on canvas, 120 x 90cm (47" x 35.5") 2007

"A portrait head made out of balloons is ridiculous. And a self portrait constructed out of those bendy balloons that clowns use is doubly so, they look like condoms for one thing. There is something sinister about this head though, no matter how many times you puncture and deflate it you know it will leeringly inflate again, rather like the murderous psychopath you are convinced you have finally drowned in the bath but who rises up again the moment your back is turned."



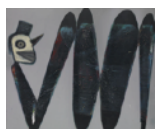
Faces on Noses

oil on canvas, 180 x 140cm (70.8" x 55") 2019

"A face has a nose. The nose has grown its own face. That face has a nose too. Then that nose has a face. Then that face has a nose. Then that nose has a face, then that face has a nose ... infinity."



Faces on Noses (20 seconds) 2021
animation by Guy Holbrow



Expand-o (18 seconds), 2021
animation by Guy Holbrow

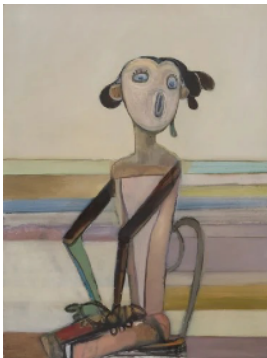
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Stripey Mouth

oil on canvas, 56 x 40.5cm (22" x 15.9") 2004

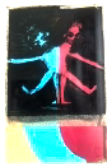
"The mouth is both mechanical and organic, like the grille at the front of a car crossed with the trapping teeth of a deep sea predator. A gate at the frontage of some inner corruption. Finger length nipples. The contents of the head (thoughts, intentions), are barely contained within an overstretched membrane, very thin paint. The torso is unpainted. The figure has evolved into itself; shaped by but also adapted to its painted circumstances."



Whistling Winnie

oil on canvas, 61 x 46cm (24" x 18") 2002

"Making faces in the mirror, performing for oneself, adopting a personality. Posing. The elbows are bent the wrong way. The opening and closing of those louvred slats in the background is a nicely judged. wink."



Joined Up Figures Share a Leg (19 x 12cm)

oil paint, glass, masking tape, paper, 2007



Testicles with Moustache

oil on canvas, 122 x 97cm (48" x 38.2") 2006

"This is just very wrong. The rear view of buttocks and legs and pendulous testicles make a face at you. The testicles are a fake nose coloured red. The moustache is fake too. Makes you wonder who painted the pinwheel eyes on the buttocks and what their intentions were. The heavier outline of the thighs is offset by the more delicate tracery of the calves and feet that double as a mouth. The hat is set at a jaunty angle."

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Six Paintings on Glass

"These look a bit like old glass plate negatives (which suggests that they might be photographic records of observable things) but the images are unlikely, improbable propositions invested with self-awareness: a military snail, a banana surprised by being peeled, a human-head lampshade, an aeroplane that might be a shark, a fish thing poking out an overlong tongue, two figures that share a leg."



Military Snail

oil paint, glass, masking tape, paper, 18 x 27cm, 2006 (left)

Surprised Banana

oil paint, glass, masking tape, paper, 18 x 27.5cm, 2006 (top centre)

Fleshy Lampshade with Face

oil paint, glass, masking tape, paper, 19 x 14cm, 2006 (centre)

Shark-plane

oil paint, glass, masking tape, paper, 18 x 23cm, 2006 (top right)

Fish-thing with Tongue

oil paint, glass, masking tape, paper, 21 x 18cm, 2006 (bottom right)



Expand-o

oil on canvas, 110 x 130cm (43.3" x 51") 2020

"There is something about the way the figure touches the top and bottom edges of the canvas as though they are rails along which the figure will run; as though the foot is the fixed point against which the figure will push off to expand and contract in slow rhythmic pulses. Like a heartbeat, but with something mechanical and inevitable and, frankly, a little sinister, comic but sinister, about it."

Painting texts by Ansel Krut

Photography by Andy Keate and Jackson White

Ansel Krut: biography, text, images, links

<https://www.domobaal.com/artists/ansel-krut-bio.html>