

Dirty Pop

Phil Allen
Peter Ashton Jones
Jake Clark
Richard Clegg
Dan Coombs
Nelson Diplexcito
Nadine Feinson
Mick Finch
Dan Hays
Gavin Lockheart
Andrea Medjesi Jones
David Leeson
Duncan Newton
Sarah Pickstone
Colin Smith
John Stark
Michael Stubbs
James White
Mark Wright

Dirty Pop, showing at & Model, Leeds from 2 May to 8 June 2013, brings together the work of twenty contemporary painters. This exhibition is a follow up to one recently held at Galeria Cadaques in Catalonia in the summer of 2012, and includes a number of artists from that exhibition.

That show focused on the legacy of the work of Richard Hamilton who had shown in Galeria Cadaques many times and was where he met and worked with Marcel Duchamp. Like the Cadaques show, the Leeds exhibition demonstrates the way that artists make works of art in the context of other works of art, positioning new work vis-à-vis existing work, not in an immediately identifiable way, but with an awareness in the work that questions and comments on itself in relation to the art of others. Paintings have a capacity to be self-referential and expansive.

Throughout the work it is evident that these painters have an acute awareness of their predecessors including seminal contemporary artists such as Richard Hamilton, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke. In his recent book, *The First Pop Age*, Hal Foster discusses imagery in the work of Hamilton, Richter and others through distinctive frames of reference, including the tabular, clichéd, distressed, photogenic and deadpan image. It is possible to take elements of this template and apply it in varying degrees to the painters in *Dirty Pop*. These ideas are present in the works on show and demonstrate how painting has a capacity to return to key ideas and yet reinvent itself, finding new associations.

Like many group exhibitions, *Dirty Pop* allows the viewer to identify themes and ideas in play across the various artists' work as well as highlighting their differences. This is perhaps most apparent through the handling of materials, the stuff that goes into making a painting. Paint records traces and gestures that represent many visual qualities from representation through to expression, and the painters in *Dirty Pop* are producing distinctive and challenging work that is adding to that tradition.

Mark Wright