

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

# Wyer Gallery

*Press Info*

Canadian artist and Slade graduate Matthew Murphy's third solo show with Wyer Gallery, July 2013.

## Matthew Murphy

Private View

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2013

Exhibition Dates

15<sup>th</sup> July 2013- 20<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Matthew Murphy creates portraits of imaginary models that take much of their visual language from Old Master paintings and drawing. His subjects are most often in an abject state with confusion and alienation written on their faces. Sometimes they tear themselves apart, mimicking poses from Renaissance anatomical drawings. But instead of revealing organic inner workings, where we would expect to see the stomach, the liver, the kidneys or a womb, Murphy instead shows us empty wine bottle and drinks glasses, set in an abdominal cavity devoid of working organs. A sense of anxiety, alcoholism, and alienation belies their youthful skin and handsome faces. And as these figures are in pairs, they either fight over bottles or complain to each other about their corporeal vulnerability.

As a visual counterpoint to these gory figures, Murphy then splashes on an obscuring layer of paint. In his watercolours, it is a carmine red that resembles a spilled glass of wine or spilt blood. In the oil paintings, this obscuring layer is often a ghost like figure, or dangling limbs, done in fleshy white. They are executed swiftly in a simple, direct way that serves as a stark visual contrast to an underlying image that was painstakingly executed in the Old Master techniques of indirect painting in glazes. The random roughness of these "splashes" serves also to highlight what remains visible in the bottom layer, sometimes leaving just enough visual information so that the viewer can guess what is depicted beneath. This can be seen as self-censorship, an expression of the impossibility of a contemporary painter aspiring to compete with Old Masters. On the other hand, it creates a dialogue between eras of art history, where one style of painting is forced into a union with another.

Underlying all this work is a gallows humour. The over-the-top dramatic poses of the figures, the way they grasp at bottles as if in a pantomime, the absurdity of destroying a painting by splashing cartoonish figures overtop all show Murphy's interest in black comedy, and betray his admiration for artists who have previously explored out this artistic territory, such as Francisco Goya, James Gillray, and George Condo.

Murphy studied Human Biology at both the University of Toronto and McGill before completing his MFA at the Slade under the tuition of Bruce McLean. He lives and works in Berlin. This will be his third solo exhibition at the Wyer Gallery.

*Cont.*

More info for Matthew Murphy:

[Wisdom Testicles](#)

## Contact

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[Map](#)



Regular **buses** to the studio from:

Clapham Junction - 337, 37, 87, 156, 39, 170

East Putney Station - 337, 37

Clapham Common - 37

Regular **trains** to Clapham Junction from:

Victoria (8 minutes)

Waterloo (10 minutes)

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