

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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CAMERON HAYES

FEBRUARY 14 – MARCH 13

This latter-day Bosch takes on the horrors of modern life in labyrinthine paintings of cartoon crowds swarming over unlikely landscapes.
Goings on about Town, THE NEW YORKER

Cameron Hayes, a young Australian artist, will exhibit figurative paintings comprised of elaborate narratives in complex compositions. The paintings, some more than eight feet wide, are montages of cartoonish characters and multitudinous scenes that illustrate allegories of human frailty, stupidity, and savagery. Images of sex, violence, and perversions are rendered with a microscopic, surrealistic craftsmanship. Hayes uses repetition, patterning, and other compositional devices to unify the visual anarchy and shifting perspectives.

Hayes conjures a world gone mad. Setting forth a premise – his titles are often complete sentences – the artist employs absurd logic to develop bizarre narratives. For example, **Mengele in Argentina**, based on Mengele's experiments on humans, imagines a population with an identical gene pool, resulting in the need for people to differentiate themselves in odd ways: for example, growing the world's longest fingernails or creating the best bucket, which are judged in contests with scoreboards and celebrated in mass rallies – until the *Guinness Book of Records* police intervene.

Its surface sprinkled with white glitter and satirizing the folly of postponing gratification, **In the South Pole the explorers were so afraid of not having enough food for winter that they starved to death in spring** depicts an Artic landscape covered with dog excrement and dead explorers. In another painting, Hayes, with a sly swipe at the Aussies, depicts refugees adapting to life on a container ship, dressed in fake Italian fashion and eating pet food.

During the looting of the Kerch Museum babies traded with ancient coins is Hayes' apotheosis of Swiftian outrage. Set during the Crimean War with contemporary relevance, the painting presents a swirling mass of battlefields. Above the battle, old generals pollute the streams, contaminating the young soldiers below; local children loot the museums, already ransacked by the troops; and other generals use human babies as barriers and scarecrows to protect their property. A blackboard records pro and con votes for a suicide mission.

Cameron Hayes has chosen to live and work in Milikapiti on Melville Island in the Northern Territory. He has exhibited regularly in Melbourne, where he received his Bachelor of Arts (Fine Arts) from RMIT in 1992. In 2002, his work was included in *Museutopia – Steps into Other Worlds* at the Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, Hagen, Germany. This is his second exhibition at the Feldman Gallery.

Cameron Hayes, a monograph published in 2004, contains reproductions of twenty-three paintings from 1994 - 2003 and the text of their stories. The catalogue is available for \$15.

There will be an opening reception on Saturday, February 14, 6:00 to 8:00.
Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 to 6:00. Monday by appointment.
For more information, contact Laura Muggeo at (212) 226-3232 or laura@feldmangallery.com.