

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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CAMERON HAYES

MAY 17 - JUNE 28

Mad things happen in the Australian painter Cameron Hayes's visionary canvases, which satirize the follies of contemporary civilization. ... These incredibly detailed paintings – influenced by comic strips, Indian miniatures and Hieronymus Bosch among other sources – have a frenzied intensity that demands close reading.

Grace Glueck, *The New York Times*, 2004

Cameron Hayes, an Australian artist, will exhibit several large-scale narrative paintings and a soft sculpture installation, which are based on allegorical stories. With visual complexity, the paintings depict groups of manic figures in absurd scenarios, both foolish and wicked, viewed from far away and high above. The wildly inventive stories relate to White European and indigenous histories and describe a world that is both comic and bleak.

The exhibition features a series titled *The Incomplete History of the Millikapiti*, which recounts the disastrous effect of the white culture upon the Aboriginal community, even when well-meaning. In the installation, **After all the whites gave all the Tiwis glasses, the owls lost their power and became domestically violent**, the Tiwi people, who are famous for their artwork, are represented by Hayes as stuffed animals. Disturbing and often violent scenes document the community's loss of innocence related to the irrelevance of their former life in modern times and to the introduction of alcohol and sugar.

In a painting about the introduction of pets to Africa, which causes the jungle animals to adopt the vanities of human behavior, the Russian scientists learn that the key to happiness is to keep expectations low. Another painting relates to Pavlov's experiments; animals will crave anything if they can suck through an udder, and a parade of kids ring bells to turn on a shower of deer's saliva. Other paintings take as their subjects Helen Keller, the first rap museum in Fatehpur Sikri, and the Greek Goddess Cassandra, who ends up living at the racetrack.

Born in Sydney in 1969 and currently based in Melbourne, Cameron Hayes lived for two years in Millikapiti, on Melville Island off the Northern-most coast of Australia. Works from this exhibition, his third solo show at the Feldman Gallery, were shown at the Melbourne City Library Gallery in 2007. His work was included in *Museutopia – Steps into Other Worlds* at the Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, Hagen, Germany as well as the Moet and Chandon Touring Exhibition in Australia. A catalogue of early works is available through the gallery.

Opening Reception: Saturday, May 17, 6 – 8pm. The exhibition runs through June 28th. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am – 6pm. Monday by appointment. For more information, contact Sarah Paulson at (212) 226-3232 or sarah@feldmangallery.com.