



THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME *fine ARTS*

Conseil des arts  
et des lettres  
Québec



## “Se non è vero, è ben trovato”

PHILLIP ALLEN, JOANNA BRYNIARSKA, NICHOLAS CHAMPKINS, WILLIAM GHARRAIE,  
CELIA HEMPTON, DARREN MURRAY, JAN MURRAY, TOM PRICE, DARREL RONALD

Opening: Friday, 12 March 2010, 6.30-9.30 PM  
13-20 March 2010, Monday-Saturday, 4.30-7.00 PM

THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME  
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“Se non è vero, è ben trovato” (“If it’s not true, it’s a good story”) is the second exhibition for 2009-2010 of the BSR Fine Arts Programme, directed by Jacopo Benci. The exhibition presents new works by the current residents, artists **Phillip Allen, Joanna Bryniarska, William Gharraie, Celia Hempton, Darren Murray, Jan Murray, Tom Price**, and architects **Nicholas Champkins** and **Darrel Ronald**. For further information, please contact Martina Sconci, Fine Arts Research Assistant [finearts@bsrome.it](mailto:finearts@bsrome.it)

The British School at Rome (BSR) is a research centre for contemporary art and architecture, and for the archaeology, history, and culture of Italy. It is one of a large group of international academies in Rome. The BSR, one of the research institutes sponsored by the British Academy, promotes residential awards for artists, architects, and researchers. The artists and architects awarded Fine Arts scholarships at the British School at Rome represent the highest standard of contemporary cultural debate in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. Not only are they established or up-and-coming practitioners, but many also teach at college and university level, thus being actively engaged with current and emerging theoretical debates. The School offers a programme of exhibitions and lectures in contemporary art and architecture; a programme of lectures and conferences in the humanities; archaeology fieldwork projects; a specialist research library; a publications programme. These programmes demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of the School and its commitment to promoting intellectual exchange with the wide range of artists and scholars at the other foreign academies and their Italian counterparts.

**Phillip Allen** (Abbey Fellow in Painting, January-March 2010) has been included in *British Art Show 6* (2005-06), and *Classified*, Tate Britain, London (2009). One person shows: Milton Keynes Gallery (2006), Xavier Hufkens, Bruxelles (2007); Approach Gallery, London (2008); Kerlin Gallery, Dublin (2009); Jean Bernier, Athens (2010).

«Phillip Allen starts by bullying the surface into a peremptory spatiality, into life. Before any imagery goes down, he applies horizontal bands of varicoloured, linearly extruded impasto, a sort of gnarly and lustrous Cinemascope letterboxing which pops forth far enough that anything else placed in the central area is already oriented in space, behind the bands, over which the eye has to hurdle. Then, centralised on the dirty, hazy ground he applies next, floating forms and fantastical arches and sundry non-Euclidean phenomena appear in something like a landscape. Superficially this is a pragmatic process of making, a sort of systemised mastering of a forbidding dead rectangle. Fine, except that along the ritualised way, something – a painterly hologram of place, protean and weird, contradictory and intermittently epic – springs into strangely plausible life.» [Martin Herbert, *Frieze Magazine*, June 2009]

**Joanna Bryniarska** (Sainsbury Scholar in Painting and Drawing, October 2009-June 2011) received her BA in Fine Art from University College Falmouth in 2004 and was subsequently awarded a Spike Island Graduate Fellowship. In June 2009 she completed her Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Academy Schools, London. Recent awards and residencies include the Richard Ford Award at the Prado Museum, Madrid, and an exchange/exhibition with the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki. Joanna has an upcoming show at the Post Box Gallery in London.

«Through paint, photography, the digital print and appropriation, Joanna Bryniarska uses tropes inherent within the construction of history and genre to parody the preconceived hierarchy of the gaze. Often taking quotations from traditional notions of paint and literature, the removal of these from their original context reflects the way in which time and history can be constantly reassembled for the purposes of the collective or the individual – seeking to authenticate a past that never existed.» [JB]

**Nicholas Champkins** (Rome Scholar in Architecture, 2009-10) completed his Master of Architecture with Distinction at the University of Bath and professional exams at the University of Cambridge. He has worked in London since 2000 with Allies and Morrison where he is an associate, alongside his own private practice. Nicholas has taught at the University of Bath and University of Plymouth, alongside regular involvement with school programmes in architecture. He gave a lecture entitled *Walls Matter* at the BSR on 3rd March 2010.

«The focus of Nicholas's study in Rome is the physical 'distortion' in architecture that acts in response to context, and in doing so makes a greater contribution to the whole. His work focuses on the development of contemporary design proposals exploring specific existing urban conditions, contrasted with investigation and study of early mannerist architecture and urban design.» [NC]

**William Gharraie** (Abbey Scholar in Painting, October 2009-June 2010) received his BA (Fine Art) at Newcastle University. He received the Bartlett Scholarship in 2005 and in 2008 was selected for the *4 New Sensations* exhibition by Channel 4 and the Saatchi Gallery.

«William Gharraie's work examines the fundamental relationships between the image and the painting ground, working with custom built paints and photographs these surfaces drift between abstraction and figurative representations. This expressive ambiguity allows him to negotiate past styles and painterly idioms creating images that are at once contemporary and historically informed.» [WG]

**Celia Hempton** (Sainsbury Scholar in Painting and Drawing, October 2008-June 2010) completed her MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2007, and previously studied at Glasgow School of Art for her BA in Fine Art. Recent prizes include the Neville Burston Memorial Award from the Royal College of Art, 2007; in 2008 she was nominated for the Sovereign European Art Prize, Jerwood Contemporary Painters, and shortlisted for the John Moores painting prize. Recent exhibitions include a solo show at Contemporary Art Projects (2008) and group exhibitions at Gimpel Fils in London, I-20 gallery New York, Temple of Hadrian as part of Rome Contemporary Art Fair (2009), and Kim Light Gallery Los Angeles (2006).

«Celia Hempton makes paintings of atmospheric, timeless, desolate, and forgotten places. Maybe not timeless but perhaps at the edge of time, on the one hand referring to the abandoned places at the boundaries of contemporary industrial and urban centres, on the other evoking some unformed, primordial space.» [Donald Smith, Director of Chelsea Space]

**Darren Murray** (Arts Council of Northern Ireland Fellow, October 2009-June 2010) studied at the University of Ulster he lives and works in Belfast. Murray has exhibited at both a national and international level and was part of *The Nature of Things*, Northern Ireland's first presentation at the 51<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennale in 2005.

«Darren Murray's painting practice employs a layering of pictorial conventions reproducing ubiquitous landscape images taken from calendars and travel brochures exploring ideas surrounding the relationship between grandiose landscape, its sublime effects and its commodification through the visual and written language of the leisure and tourism industry.» [DM]

**Jan Murray** (Australia Council Resident Artist, January-March 2010) gained her Postgraduate Diploma, Victorian College of the Arts (1981) and her MFA at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (1993). Since 1982 her work has been exhibited in Australia, Germany, France and the USA and is widely represented in international collections including the Guggenheim Museum and the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Previous Australia Council Residencies include Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (1984-85) and ViaFarini, Milan (1999). She is currently the Deputy Head, School of Art, VCA&M, The University of Melbourne.

«Jan Murray's paintings and installations investigate the internal and external architecture of 'Painting' by testing the literal and metaphorical 'limits' of painting as object and illusionistic vehicle – most recently by examining the complex relationship between the creative and destructive action.» [JM]

**Tom Price** (Arts Council England Helen Chadwick Fellow, September 2009-March 2010) studied at the Royal College of Art, and lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include Hales Gallery (London, UK) and NEXT (Chicago, USA), as well as having his work shown on over 6.5 million bottles of Beck's beer. Tom has upcoming shows at Hales Gallery and the Russian Club Gallery in London.

«Tom's work, which mainly takes the form of sculpture and stop-motion animation video, examines how pre-existing social and individual 'filters' affect our interpretation of visual clues – and consequently our perception of character and identity – and how the perceived identity of an individual is often used to represent more than itself.» [TP]

**Darrel Ronald** (Québec Architecture Resident, January-March 2010) is a partner at Open Form Architecture in Montréal (CA) and has recently finished a research grant on *Digital Fabrication and Manufacturing*. He has previously worked for the Montréal architecture practices of Hal Ingberg Architect and The Arcop Group. After receiving an M.Arch. from the Université de Montréal he worked as a project leader at Maxwan architects + urbanists in Rotterdam (NL).

«The work in Rome focuses on applied research in complexity theory to develop theories and strategies for understanding and designing in cities. With investigations into ecology and biomimicry; computation and logic; social and political network structures; as well as economic, demographic and geographic transformation patterns; the goal is to understand cities through multidisciplinary perspectives and learn to see organized, emergent network and system behaviour in urban agents and their dynamics.» [DR]