

**Text for press release**

**Ross Chisholm**  
**«Man Directing Water»**

**October 9th – December 18th, 2010**

**Opening times:**  
**Friday and Saturday 14h00 – 18h00**  
**and by prior arrangement**

**Grieder Contemporary is delighted to present British artist Ross Chisholm's first ever solo exhibition in Berlin, entitled 'Man Directing Water'. Chisholm's practice is characterized by a deep exploration into the language of painting, through a deconstruction of the medium's conventions, and the creation of composite worlds, where time, place and memory collapse.**

Chisholm's practice departs from painting conventions, such as portraiture, photorealism and abstraction, which are investigated and reconfigured to present layered complex assemblages of meaning and reality.

The source material he uses come from disparate points in time, and invariably include society portraits from the 18<sup>th</sup> century sourced from catalogue and print reproductions, as well as slides from the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century found in second-hand markets. Chisholm selects, edits and mashes up figures and landscapes from such incongruent sources, as in the case of the use of bourgeois ladies from two different 1770s Reynolds paintings ('Seminal Lloyd', 2010, 'Delme Flux', 2010 and 'Plinth 2010', 2010), and members of different quintessentially English families on holiday from found slides ('British People in Hot Weather', 2010). These are figures, which, even if not known to the viewer, at least bring out a sense of familiarity. Any sense of familiarity or nostalgia however is fragmented and nonsensical, as dissimilar referential images are brought together, figures are often cut off, disjointed or displaced, and styles are inconsistent and change within and between paintings. The resulting, often strange, composite worlds bring about a sense of collapse of time, place and memory.

From a painterly perspective, Chisholm manages to shift from luscious figurative portraiture to abstract and minimal backgrounds to photorealistic 'interventions' with skill and confidence. Such incongruent styles are brought together on the surface of the canvas, and layered with Chisholm's calculated painterly marks, such as solid or smeared blobs of paint, geometric or abstract shapes and fluid brushes.

Process is very important to Chisholm's practice, which becomes evident both in the manner in which artworks are created, as well as in the way they are exhibited. In the case of paintings, Chisholm works on canvases for months, often leaving them in his studio for periods 'to marinate', as he says, and coming back to them again and again to try out ingredients. There are infinite ways in which elements can be added or removed from a painting at any one time, and as such, a painting is never finished. Chisholm's 'finished' works are indeed in a state of flux; they aim to capture a point in time and highlight the inevitability of the breakdown of the medium. This becomes more obvious with works such as 'Seminal Lloyd' (2010), where the same image is serialized from abstraction to figuration, presenting something different each time. Like color level testing in printer settings operations or covers of songs and music mash-ups, Chisholm breaks down the notions of layering and rhythm in painting to highlight the medium's temporality, in a way customizing a syntactical and temporal framework through which works can be read.

The deconstruction of the language of painting is not limited to the canvas but often extends above and beyond it. Chisholm plays with framing and mounting practices, sometimes using or customizing second-hand found frames for his drawings and paintings, other times adding blotches of paint on the glass of framed drawings that conceal parts of the image behind it, while often groups of works are installed in non-obvious configurations creating spatial constellations that become part of the work. Interventions on found slides, which are then printed and blown up, are also calculated, adding yet another layer to the assemblage of works. Such deep explorations allow for a 3dimensionality of individual pieces, while 'Man Directing Water' as a whole opens up new unexpected readings of reference points and realities, past and present.

Ross Chisholm (born 1977) lives and works in London. Solo exhibitions include Marc Jancou Contemporary, NY, IBID PROJECTS, London and Grieder Contemporary, Zurich. Group exhibitions include The Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art; Galerie Akinci, Amsterdam; Engholm Engelhorn Galerie, Vienna; Marc Jancou Contemporary, New York; Galerie Rudiger Schottle, Munich; and Bloomberg Space, London.

(Text by Chloe Vaitsou)