

Press Release

MARIO WAGNER – CLUSTER 10

22nd April – 21st May 2011



The Outsiders Newcastle, the North-East gallery of curator-director Steve Lazarides, presents 'Cluster 10', the debut solo UK exhibition by San Francisco-based artist Mario Wagner.

Wagner's colourful and arresting style has been used to great effect in premium style titles like Esquire and Vanity Fair. His canvasses depict a contrasting mythos: free-thinking and colourful retro-futurist scenes are blighted by contemporary intruders, well-tailored men seemingly up to no good, made all the more intimidating and inhuman by their balaclavas.

The paintings' collage backgrounds harken back to the 50s and 60s when science fact raced to keep up with science fiction. It was an era when technology was embraced unthinkingly, and man was only a short step from realising a total leisure culture or his destiny amongst the stars, depending on his adventurousness of spirit. The pictures' protagonists however pursue a very different agenda. Slick moral relativists from a more recent age, they ride out with sinister intent, set traps, stew plots, and bury their dead clandestinely in compelling micro-narratives that trigger the less welcome elements of our imagination. Tomorrow's world has not been realised, nor was it ever likely to be. A lack of personal jet packs is the least of our concerns.

Fear and excitement lustfully combine as the viewer is propelled into Wagner's opulent but often threatening dreamscapes. Who and what do we sympathise with more - the giddily assured optimism represented in Wagner's canvasses by post-war science fiction, or the shrewd self-preserving realism of the figures who slink through it?

If you could forgive the Man from UNCLE for fiddling his expenses, or likewise feel that the future needs guardians fast, then 'Cluster 10' will push your buttons.

Notes to Editors

Mario Wagner

Mario Wagner, born in 1974, works as an artist and illustrator in San Francisco, USA. Wagner creates his collages incorporating vintage print media using analogue methods - scissors and glue with considerable finesse. His work has been shown internationally and across the US in exhibitions such as those at SCOPE, Art Basel Miami, and the NADA Art Fair with the Pool Gallery from Berlin. Wagner's commercial illustrations and artworks have been commissioned by Esquire, Vanity Fair, and The New York Times Magazine.

The Outsiders Galleries, Newcastle and Soho

Re-launching the first ever Lazarides gallery spaces under a new heading in July 2010, The Outsiders sells affordable originals, prints, collectibles and books from the Lazarides stable of artists and more. We produce exclusive small run editions, hand finished prints, and works on paper in our Wapping printing studio. Each of the gallery's basement areas are project spaces showcasing works from new and emerging talents, as well as offering Lazarides artists a place to play and produce experimental shows. Incorporating the online shop and the spaces on Greek Street and in Newcastle, The Outsiders welcomes over ten thousand visitors annually.

Lazarides

Working outside conventional practice and the contemporary art system, Lazarides welcomes a broad audience to an extensive exhibition programme, off-site projects and online exhibitions. Lazarides supports and develops the work of a group of artists who collectively defy categorization.

Founded in 2006 by Steve Lazarides, the group represents some of the most exciting and innovative artists working today including Antony Micallef, David Choe, JR, Vhils, Faile, Jonathan Yeo, Charlie Isoe, Conor Harrington, Ian Francis, Stanley Donwood, 3D, Invader, Kelsey Brookes, Mode 2, Todd James /Reas, Blu, Paul Insect and BAST.