

Charles Williams

Wonderful Creatures

14 February – 29 March

New Art Projects is delighted to announce our second solo show by British painter Charles Williams. Williams is known as a painter of both fantasy and personification. The protagonists in his paintings come from the virtual realm where these ideas meet. However, his characters look back at us from his picture planes into our realities, holding a mirror that reflects the complexities of the human condition.

But where do these animals, and fantastic creatures come from? Has there been a conscious process of literary and classical research? Or, do they appear as if by magic, from an inbuilt sensibility? A more intuitive source?

Williams observes and comments on his constant process of both being an artist and of making paintings by asking: *“Where do paintings come from? What are they for? What does painting as an activity have that other image-making technologies lack? The answer is immediacy. Paint lets you do what you want, really. You make it up. You make up and extend what you know about – and for painters that depends on your training, (an expression I hate, but I can’t find another that works). Academic training was, essentially, to enable the painter to extemporise figural compositions on a canvas. To make up History Paintings I have adopted a dim echo of that process, and so my paintings are figures, creatures at least, in a convincing space. I can’t resist placing my figures in these spaces, however the rest of the composition of my characters is up to my subconscious.”*

So, these characters, personifications and animals are ‘figures’ that have appeared from the subconscious realm of the imagination without tailored research, or consciously applied classical references. They are not based on photographs or the digital manipulations and augmentations that seem to stand in for the human imagination proposed by AI. Some of these ‘creatures’ do remind or conjure images from stories read as children, winged figures populate the sky, animals write books and go on adventures. Some float on the air while others fall from the sky.

Williams observes that *“the space these wonderful creatures move around in is dreamlike, or unreal, or a nowhere place. It is, perhaps, like the ideal spaces that*

illustrate Diderot's Encyclopaedia, at once rigorously perspectival and completely flat. Painting is for making things up but it's only ever painting. It's not words, it is images, and images have to live somewhere." These 'creatures' do indeed live and are given both life and space by Williams in which to exist in our space and time.

"The rabbit turns up and somehow, he's a writer. Definitely a boy, too. He's a writer and a worrier, an academic, overly concerned with chewing over little bits of information." Charles Williams observes and demonstrates that *"painting is for dreaming"* and his works included in this new show invite you to dream with him and to engage in person and to converse with the personifications of these dreams.

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