

# Mike Pratt

## *Good Mourning Bell*

15<sup>th</sup> January – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2011  
Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 5pm  
(or by appointment)



Workplace Gallery is pleased to present *Good Mourning Bell* our first solo exhibition of work by Mike Pratt.

Pratt's work confronts the established conventions of painting, through an immediate and unashamedly direct indulgence in painting as an activity in its own right, combined with an ethically questionable position of borrowing, remaking and 'wrongful' appropriation. Authenticity, style and the cycle of assimilation that exists both within contemporary art and popular culture are central concerns in Pratt's work. Contemporary artists such as Christopher Wool and Paul McCarthy as well as 20th Century artists who reshaped the process of Art such as Basquiat, Polke and Warhol, all become the fodder for Pratt's lexicon. However, rather than paying homage to his forerunners Pratt borrows and steals, walking a fine line between mimicry and imitation. Through this method of sampling and re-mastering Pratt combines stylistic quotation with deadpan observation and dumb mark making, layering and obliterating his paintings until work is deemed at an end, yet never resolved.

"The works engage with frank and simple imagery, they stand as a remark; there is nothing sentimental or 'worldly', just a curiosity into the processes... Each action obliterates the last until the 'right' gesture has the final say. I have no problem recycling the ideas of others; I see this as my viewpoint - to select and covet from the existing to make the new. I see everything as a physical structure; this in itself demands reasoning, a competence to relate not only to its environment but to itself. The idea that a piece of work becomes self aware and insecure..." (Mike Pratt, 2010)

Pratt's new large-scale works combine painting with large format screen prints taken from close up detail sections of an earlier painting. The extracted details are shifted and repeated creating a blurring of half tones, a digitized and interrupted suggestion of a painterly background. These works are complex and uncertain statements of contradiction and affirmation, they become neurotically charged phrases that 'confess all' whilst at the same time disguising and camouflaging themselves. Pratt's work is a head-on collision with the history of the present. The satire in his work plays like relentless canned laughter to the intuitive handling of the material and the romantic allusions of painting, striking a careful and sophisticated balance that takes you on an invigorating new journey through seemingly familiar territory.

Mike Pratt was born in Seaham, UK in 1987. He completed a BA in Fine Art at Northumbria University in 2009 where he received the Paul Mason sculpture prize. Solo exhibitions and projects include *Cumberland Sausage*, Extraspazio, Rome; *HUBBA HUBBA*, Satellite Gallery, Newcastle, UK; Workplace Gallery at The Manchester Contemporary 2009. Group exhibitions include *aggetti - progettazioni - proiezioni - prominenze - protuberanze - sporgenze*, Extraspazio, Rome; NADA Art Fair, Miami, Workplace Gallery; *JAMBON*, Moving Gallery, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK; *Captain of all Pleasures*, EMBASSY Gallery, Edinburgh, UK; *Psychic Geography*, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, UK; *Some people deserve everything they get*, The Royal Standard, Liverpool, UK. Mike Pratt lives and works in Newcastle, UK.

Workplace Gallery was founded by artists Paul Moss and Miles Thurlow. Based in Gateshead UK, Workplace Gallery represents a portfolio of emerging and established artists through the gallery programme, curatorial projects and international art fairs. Workplace Gallery opened in 2005 at 34 Ellison Street, Gateshead - part of Trinity Square Shopping Centre particularly noted for its iconic Brutalist car park designed by architect Rodney Gordon for the Owen Luder Partnership, which featured as a key location in Mike Hodges 1971 cult British gangster film *Get Carter* starring Michael Caine. Since the original gallery was demolished in 2008 Workplace Gallery has relocated to The Old Post Office in Gateshead, a listed 19th Century red brick building built upon the site where the important British artist, engraver, and naturalist Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) lived and died.

The next exhibition at Workplace Gallery will be a solo exhibition of new work by Cath Campbell opening on 18th February 2011.

Kindly supported by:



For more information please contact Paul Moss or Miles Thurlow

Email: [info@workplacegallery.co.uk](mailto:info@workplacegallery.co.uk)

Telephone: +44 (0)191 477 2200

Website: [www.workplacegallery.co.uk](http://www.workplacegallery.co.uk)

Workplace Gallery, The Post Office, 19-21 West Street, Gateshead, NE8 1AD, UK  
[www.workplacegallery.co.uk](http://www.workplacegallery.co.uk)