

GED QUINN





ROSE CHERRY
IRON RUST FLAMINGO



Exhibition view, Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong Pedder Building, May 2017

Rose, Cherry, Iron Rust, Flamingo is the first solo exhibition of Ged Quinn (b. 1963, UK) in Asia. Widely regarded as one of the leading painters in Britain, Quinn is renowned for his multi-layered landscape paintings that incorporate art historical subjects and the use of trompe l'oeil to challenge the idea of painting. Inspired by the poetry technique the "ideogrammic method" by the late American poet Ezra Pound, the exhibition title, *Rose, Cherry, Iron Rust, Flamingo*, alludes to the use of concrete images to create an abstract concept and explores the different expository potentials of image making central to our reading of painting itself.

To create illusionary landscapes that oscillate in between the familiar and the surreal, Quinn carefully selects imageries from diverse historical and allegorical subjects and then renders them in front of idealised landscape backdrops by well-known masters of history paintings, like Claude Lorrain and Nicolas Poussin, from the Baroque period. Taking an active interest in French New Wave filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard's use of montage and the Mnemosyne Atlas project by German art historian Aby Warburg, which investigates iconography and universalism in art, Quinn uses images without a linear progression or logic in mind. For the artist, making a painting is a visible thought process based on his own memory and improvisation to create a meta-narrative. The artist's intention is to provoke an intertextual reading of painting; he takes it to a place where politics, literature, philosophy, and cultural memory create a vitality and tension that is both surreal and transcendental. Quinn states, "The reason that both Godard and Warburg interest me is that they function as composite works of images that are more about an iconology of interrelationships rather than the meaning of the images themselves. The spaces between the images are important because one's perception is altered by the juxtaposition. I like to play with that dialectic of proximity and distance through montage images and intervention with the landscape."

In a post-modern age where, in Quinn's words, "truth" had been disenfranchised from the origins and subjugated by the corrupted "real", the only way to provoke new meanings is to first corrupt the original meaning of the source itself. For things must fall apart before they can come together in new forms. Quinn uses painting to critique its own limitation, achieving what is still possible by questioning the process of image making and its legitimacy. Painting is not so much a didactic exercise for reproducing images, but in the first place it is a faithful experiment to reflect on the emotional and symbolic power of images from a cross-cultural and historical perspective.

On view at the gallery is a series of new landscape, seascape, still life, and flower paintings presented together with a few portrait paintings from the past. A temporary dwelling with the structural outline of a small hut takes up a quarter of the entire gallery space. This architectural intervention is meant to break down the gallery space and to create different physical thresholds for looking at the paintings. The paintings with a horizon line are installed at a uniform height to simulate how images from individual paintings come together like disparate film stills and fall apart like a montage, with their meaning constantly evolving.





Bela Forgets the Scissors, 2016, Oil on linen, 200 x 331.5 cm (78 3/4 x 130 1/2 in.)



Bela Forgets the Scissors, 2016 (detail)





Plane, Plank, Nameless Bridge, 2017, Oil on linen, 200 x 380 cm (78 3/4 x 149 5/8 in.)



Plane, Plank, Nameless Bridge, 2017 (detail)

Plane, Plank, Nameless Bridge, 2017 (detail)







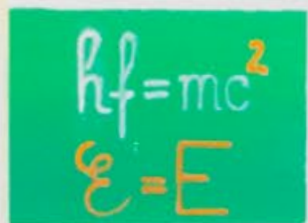
Mongrel Periplum, 2017, Oil on linen, 200 x 234 cm (78 3/4 x 92 1/8 in.)





Mongrel Periplum, 2017 (detail)









I Hear an Axe Has Flowered, 2017, Oil on linen, 200 x 195 cm (78 3/4 x 76 3/4 in.)



I Hear an Axe Has Flowered, 2017 (detail)



I Hear an Axe Has Flowered, 2017 (detail)

Q & A with GED QUINN

during production of works for China in May 2017

We're talking whilst these works are in progress, but in certain works immediately preceding this show (*Tarsus*, for example) you made reference to the works of Italian writer and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini and in particular to his unmade film "St Paul". The radical, progressive, and transgressive nature of Pasolini's work is well documented. Is that the main locus of your engagement with him?

I admire Pasolini's relentless confrontation with the concepts of the Passion and holiness and the way in which he addressed the dialectic of abjection and the sublime—his direct engagement with the political without fear of intimacy. There is also a poetic method by which he dealt with how what he saw as pureness and "truth" had been disenfranchised from their origins and subjugated by the corrupted "real". In my painting, in some ways I utilise the falsehoods of the background works—after all, the reality of the landscape that surrounded Rome was very different from that which Claude purported to represent—in a way in which the works can work with and yet outside of the, let's say the corruption, in those images in order to disorientate. By the juxtaposition of origins, myths, culture, and politics in the unique medium of painting, those confrontations are both immediate and intimate. For Pasolini, I think it was ultimately the question of religion that was always on the horizon and its ability (very much alive today) for confrontation. In his "St Paul", he was attempting to articulate that the spirit which created it [the church] no longer recognises in it the name in which it was created. That's relevant, and for me the fact that "St Paul" was never made and Warburg's "Mnemosyne" no longer exists (and on another level, Claude's images of Arcadia and Ruisdael's vision of nature too). There is a great appeal in those works; they provide such a strong thing to explore, such as the opportunity to take those works that were in themselves attempting a remapping of film and art history along different lines of enquiry that departed from a nineteenth century formalist practice.

You have referenced the early 20th century Mnemosyne project of the German cultural theorist and art historian Aby Warburg in these works. Why did you find his work interesting?

I found Warburg after I started to work with montages. I had been thinking of Beuys' blackboards—his teaching blackboards and how, to me, Warburg's lecture aids were functioning like an image-based version of Beuys' scratchy diagrammatic aids. The black backgrounds and the images placed without linear progression were making an idea, a thought process visible: memory and how to represent it, as it is—a discursive, non-linear logic. Warburg was interested in the Renaissance and how its significance/ideas/memories could be brought into contemporary culture, but I envisaged how I could reinterpret the concept and take it somewhere else. I was looking at culture and politics, philosophy, art, and film. But memory and how to map the emotional, intellectual, and symbolic power of images as an analysis of cross-cultural history, that's what interests me in these works. To stray into literature, I could see that process in the works of Sebald too. There are paradoxes in everything I find most engaging. In film, Jean-Luc Godard's *Histoires du Cinema* plays with the power of images through montage, but uses the relationship between the documentary or created image, the text, and the fiction to produce a tension by constructing new combinations for them. It collides the idealism or (melo) drama of film stills with stills from documentary footage of deeply disturbing images from times of conflict or genocide or revolution. I like the fact that painting allows me to dislocate and distance images even further, to put the whole iconography under stress—that, for me, is where the beauty arises. The reason that both "Mnemosyne" and *Histoires* interested me is that they function as composite works of images that are more about an iconology of interrelationships rather than an iconology of the meaning of the images themselves. The spaces between the images are important because one's perception is altered by the juxtaposition. I like to play with that dialectic of proximity and distance through montage images and intervention with the landscape.

You seem to arrange the images in an ahistorical way that suggests a questioning of the value of origins. Your choices of imagery appear to suggest an intellectual nomadism and a disregard, or even disdain, for disciplinary and conceptual boundaries. The tensions

between the images and the spaces between them and the background on which they are overlaid, or incorporated within, create such beauty, but a paradox—almost irreconcilable tensions. It brings to mind the “terrible beauty” of Yeats in “Easter, 1916”.

There is no hierarchy within images but visually and conceptually the works play with the juxtapositions; the placement of them is compositionally important in the works as the power in the scene may be located, not necessarily within the images, but in between, in the spaces that they leave—on the frontier so to speak. Deleuze highlighted, in Godard’s use of montage, that the interaction of the images engenders a frontier that belongs to neither one nor the other, and I think that play is important but I do not believe they can be regarded as if there were a meaningful allegory or metaphor there, something to “understand”, some “truth” to uncover. I recall that W. G. Sebald in *After Nature* writes:

... Our brains, after all,
are always at work on some quivers
of self-organisation, however faint,
and it is from this that an order
arises, in places beautiful
and comforting, though more cruel, too,
than the previous state of ignorance.
It’s in the process I think.

You paint everything personally in every work that you produce. Why do you not use assistants or any kind of technological aids?

The director of a museum in the US made a studio visit and saw the range of paintings that I was working on in their various stages and was almost shocked. She could see the process and was saying, “This is amazing. This is real painting, real paintings...” The process

is painstaking and slow, but the time it takes suits my thought processes. I don’t believe that painting is any kind of supreme form but I get somewhere more interesting and more intense with the progress and the process of choosing, removing, editing, and appreciating images and thoughts in context. As Warburg knew, memory is a slow process—recalling, reinventing, or misremembering things that I’ve seen or read and how they fit. Things falling apart and coming together in new forms.

In this collection of works, there are some very dark seascapes and flat plains with dominant horizons. What was it that drew you to those as background works?

In this body of work, the strong horizon worked for me both compositionally and conceptually. Compositionally, the montage images create a tension with it. Conceptually, I liked Zizek’s idea of the horizon as a representation of finitude, of death, of the end. The beautiful paradox in that is if when looking at the horizon you are looking at death, then the desire to travel towards it is like a death drive, but it can never be reached. The horizon is always unreachable and, therefore, so is finitude. In the Ruisdael seascapes, the horizon is so stark, two thirds sky, rather like the planar division in Rothko’s and American minimalist field paintings. Such stark contrasts. Landscape is a different metaphor; in Poussin’s and Claude’s works, it was a dwelling place for the gods, a place of imagined beauty with the Italianate system for balancing compositions in a pleasing to the eye way with taller trees on one side and smaller on the other. I like the fact that they were inventions. I also like the fact that they were falsehoods—desires for Arcadia. The place that Ruisdael was coming from was different, marked by Dutch Lutheranism; a place of turbulence, his themes of landscape were extremes of birth, maturity, and death. The environment features in a very different way: his seascapes and bleaching field landscapes are almost abstraction by accident—land/sky or sea/sky—a bed squeezed down onto featureless flatlands by a massive void of sky or towering, looming grey clouds. A different environment both externally and internally. The Northern European Renaissance was much more severe, but still created imaginary landscapes.



Blue for Dinner, 2017, Oil on linen, 36 x 41 cm (14 1/8 x 16 1/8 in.)



Model for Contempt, 2017, Oil on linen, 45 x 68 cm (17 3/4 x 26 3/4 in.)





Geography Correct, 2017, Oil on linen, 25 x 41 cm (9 7/8 x 16 1/8 in.)



A Kind of Wick or Snuff, 2014–17, Oil on linen, 274.5 x 183 cm (108 1/8 x 72 in.)







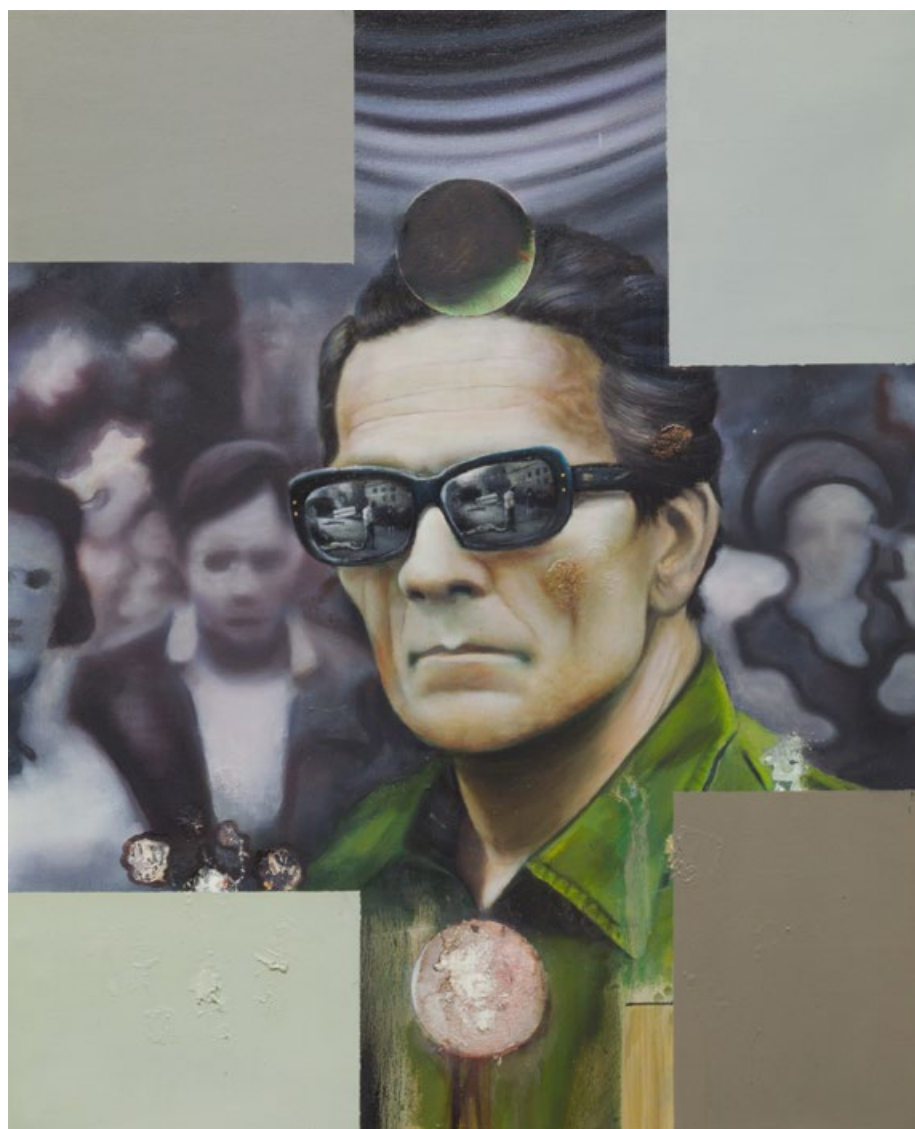
The Book of Two Ways, 2013, Oil on linen, 61.5 x 50 cm (24 1/4 x 19 5/8 in.)
Framed: 97.5 x 86.5 x 22 cm (38 3/8 x 34 x 8 5/8 in.)



Saint Paul, 2014, Oil on linen, 93.5 x 49.5 cm (36 3/4 x 19 1/2 in.)

Framed (open): 110.5 x 100 x 29.5 cm (43 1/2 x 39 3/8 x 11 5/8 in.)

Framed (closed): 55 x 100 x 29.5 cm (21 5/8 x 39 3/8 x 11 5/8 in.)



Peter, Paul, Mary, 2014, Oil on linen, 61 x 49.5 cm (24 x 19 1/2 in.)



GED QUINN

Ged Quinn was born in 1963 in Liverpool, UK. In the 1980s and 90s, Quinn studied at the Ruskin School of Drawing, Oxford, UK; Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK; Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf, Germany; and Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He now lives and works in Cornwall, UK.

Despite the familiar aspects in Ged Quinn's use of painting techniques—ranging from the classical and Romantic traditions of European landscape, such as Caspar David Friedrich, to the American Sublime—his introduction of incongruent and often disturbing imagery, disruptions of scale, and an undercurrent of religious sensibility and political and cultural iconography creates a sense of haunting and dislocation. In Quinn's work, the landscapes themselves have a visionary character, providing an unfolding freedom that is a boundless showground for significance. There are circulations, juxtapositions, and layering that allow for a large amount of readings and narratives to develop and disappear. There is a constant sense of play both between and within the imagery, which gives space for meanings, yet ultimately denies the satisfaction of any final explanation.

There is an energy that moves throughout his works, which is in part driven by Quinn's surreal and radical methods of composition and use of imagery. In conflicting and irregular landscapes, there are complex voids and structures. Ged Quinn is celebrated for his densely layered paintings that transform art historical techniques into contemporary experience. His paintings critique cultural icons through intervention, rather than through strict representation, with concepts of historicity and the collapse of boundaries between the internal and external, all working in definite ways to generate a stimulating political and cultural dialogue. He works in meticulous detail and executes with extraordinary technical skill. Multiple histories, narratives, and mythological emblems collide. The interplay of elements drawn from Western cultural history, mythology, philosophy, and the imagination create an engagement with the viewer that challenges and plays with preconceived notions of beauty and art.

GED QUINN

1963	Born in Liverpool, UK			<i>The Future's Not What It Used To Be</i> , Newlyn Art Gallery, Penzance, UK
1982–85	Studied at Ruskin School of Drawing, Oxford, UK			<i>Disaster/The End of Days</i> , Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, France
1985–87	Studied at Slade School of Fine Art, London, UK	2012		<i>The Endless Renaissance</i> , Bass Museum of Art, Miami, USA
1988–90	Studied at Kunstakademie Dusseldorf, Germany			<i>Beyond Reality: British Painting Today</i> , Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic
1993–94	Studied at Rijksakademie Amsterdam, the Netherlands			<i>Everywhere and Nowhere</i> , Reydan Weiss Collection, Oberstdorf, Germany
Present	Lives and works in Cornwall, UK	2010		<i>The Witching Hour</i> , Waterhall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Birmingham, UK
	Selected Solo Exhibitions			<i>Chambres à part IV: Mascarade</i> , A proposition by Laurence Dreyfus, Paris, France
				<i>Restore Us and Regain: Ged Quinn, Tommy Grace, Tony Swain</i> , Mackintosh Museum, The Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, UK
2017	<i>Rose, Cherry, Iron Rust, Flamingo</i> , Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong, China			<i>Lust for Life & Dance of Death</i> , Olbricht Collection, Kunsthalle Krems, Austria
2014	Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK			<i>Newspeak: British Art Now</i> , Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
2013	The New Art Gallery Walsall, West Midlands, UK	2009		<i>Newspeak: British Art Now</i> , State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2012	<i>FOCUS: Ged Quinn</i> , Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX, USA			<i>Kunskog</i> , Five Hundred Dollars, London, UK
2011	Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK			<i>Kings, Gods and Mortals</i> , Hamish Morrison Galerie, Berlin, Germany
2010	<i>Somebody's Coming That Hates Us</i> , Wilkinson Gallery, London, UK	2008		<i>John Moores 25</i> , Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK
2007	<i>My Great Unhappiness Gives Me a Right to Your Benevolence</i> , Wilkinson Gallery, London, UK			<i>Made Up</i> , Liverpool Biennale 2008, Tate Liverpool, UK
2005	Wilkinson Gallery, London, UK			<i>Jekyll Island</i> , Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva, Switzerland
	<i>The Heavenly Machine</i> , Spike Island, Bristol, UK			<i>Doktors Traum</i> , Olbricht Collection—New Aspects, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, Germany
2004	<i>Utopia Dystopia</i> , Tate St. Ives, Cornwall, UK			<i>Monochrome: Drawing & Prints</i> , Rabley Drawing Centre, Wiltshire, UK
1994	<i>Oxide Cinema</i> , video media installation, Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, the Netherlands	2007		<i>Stranger than Paradise</i> , Galerie Charlotte Moser, Geneva, Switzerland
	Selected Group Exhibitions			<i>Rockers Island</i> , Olbricht Collection, Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany
				<i>Salon Nouveau</i> , Engelholm Engelholm Gallery, Vienna, Austria
2017	<i>Synthetic Landscapes: Reviewing the ideal landscape</i> , Meadow Arts and Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shifnal, UK	2006		<i>Collezionami</i> , 2nd Biennale of Southern Italy, Puglia, Italy
2015	<i>CLASSICITY: Ancient art, contemporary objects</i> , Breese Little, London, UK	2005		<i>The Real Ideal</i> , Millennium Galleries, Sheffield, UK
	<i>Twentieth Anniversary Exhibition</i> , Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK			<i>Wonderings...</i> , Waugh & Thistleton, London, UK
	<i>Homeland: Glenn Brown, Dexter Dalwood, Ged Quinn, Toby Ziegler</i> , Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong, China			<i>ShowCASE</i> , City Art Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland
2014	<i>Somos Libres II</i> , Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin, Italy	2000		MOSTYN 2005, Oriel Mostyn, Llandudno, Wales, UK
	<i>Cake and Lemon Eaters: Viktor Pivovarov and Ged Quinn</i> , Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic;	1999		<i>Brooks Quinn Voss</i> , Newlyn Art Gallery, Penzance, UK
	The Gallery of Fine Arts in Ostrava, Czech Republic			<i>Show</i> , Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York, NY, USA
	<i>Landscape 2000</i> , Osnabrück Cultural History Museum and Felix Nussbaum Haus, Osnabrück, Germany	1997		<i>IWPC 10</i> , Museum of Recent History, Ljubiana, Slovenia
2013	<i>Looking at the View</i> , Tate Britain, London, UK	1995		<i>Performance</i> , video installation with Oliver Herring, Camden Arts Centre, London, UK
				<i>Language of the Wall</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art, Ljubiana, Slovenia

	Fellowships and Residencies
1995	British Council bursary for Slovenia
1993	NUFFIC bursary for Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
1988	DAAD Scholarship, Germany
1987	Boise Fellowship
	Selected Publications
2015	<i>20 Years</i> , essays by Stephen Friedman and Sarah Thornton, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK (catalogue)
2014	<i>Cake and Lemon Eaters. Viktor Pivovarov & Ged Quinn</i> , Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic
2013	<i>Ged Quinn</i> , New Art Gallery Walsall, West Midlands, UK
2012	<i>Ged Quinn: FOCUS</i> , Fort Worth Museum of Art, Fort Worth, Texas, USA (exhibition brochure)
2011	<i>Ged Quinn</i> , Stephen Friedman Gallery, London, UK (catalogue)
2010	<i>Lust for Life & Dance of Death</i> , Olbricht Collection, Kunsthalle Krems, Krems, Austria
	<i>Newspeak: British Art Now</i> , The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK
2009	<i>Newspeak: British Art Now</i> , The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia
2007	<i>My Great Unhappiness Gives Me a Right to Your Benevolence</i> , Wilkinson Gallery, London, UK
	Public Collections
	British Museum, London, UK
	FLAG Art Foundation, New York, USA
	Honart Museum, Tehran, Iran
	K11 Art Foundation (KAF), Hong Kong, China
	Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas, USA
	Olbricht Collection, Essen, Germany
	Saatchi Collection, London, UK
	Tate Collection, London, UK
	Tel Aviv Art Museum, Israel
	Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK

PearlLam Galleries

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Singapore	15 Dempsey Road, #01-08, Singapore 249675, tel (65) 6570 2284
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