

Richard Hamilton *Shit and Flowers*

27 May – 3 July 2010
Private View 26 May 6-8pm

The Alan Cristea Gallery at
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Press Release



"Hamilton has a surgical understanding of the zeitgeist, an umbilical connection to his times that allows him simultaneously to participate in them and step back from them, to evaluate them while he lives them. [He] was the first to understand the dynamics of the media. The first to understand the consumer revolution. The first to acknowledge the unstoppable power of the image."

Waldemar Januszczak, The Sunday Times, 7 March 2010

Richard Hamilton returns to his 'scatological period' to curate *Shit and Flowers*, an exhibition of his own work from the 1970s at the **Alan Cristea Gallery** from 27 May.

The selected works in the exhibition will include paintings, drawings, collages, etchings, lithographs, collotypes, stage proofs and trial proofs loaned from the artist's own collection.

A set of vintage postcards depicting some locals squatting, with their trousers down, in the Pyrenees countryside was the starting point for Hamilton to create this extraordinary series.

He was further inspired by a then new advertising campaign for Andrex toilet tissue by J Walter Thompson. Reminiscent of paintings by Watteau or Boucher, they portrayed the new 'shades' of paper in a lush rural setting with women in floating garments holding pieces of appropriately coloured fabric. The 'Shit and Flowers' motif was born – a subject that Hamilton studied and revisited for much of the decade. In making the work, he intentionally and wholeheartedly immersed himself in a 'world of schmaltz'.

Although Hamilton worked in the aesthetic tradition of great artists such as Cézanne and Picasso, he was continuously drawn to the contemporary world of advertising and design and to the Duchampian rejection of painting. In taking these images of flowers and landscapes from one world (which had, in turn, been borrowed from art history) and returning them to the world of fine art, he was making an ironic commentary on the co-existence, and in some senses interdependence, of these two worlds. Hamilton continues to wrestle with the language of painting, and all it stands for, to the present day.

Notes to Editors:

Richard Hamilton was born in 1922 in London. His contribution to the field of contemporary art is unsurpassed. His collage of 1956 entitled *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* is widely acknowledged as one of the first pieces of 'Pop Art', and his written definition of what 'pop' is, laid the ground for the whole international movement. Since then his work, both in painting and printmaking, has consistently challenged and broken boundaries and he is considered to be one of the most important artists working today. His exhibition, *Modern Moral Matters* runs at the Serpentine Gallery, London until 25 April 2010.

Alan Cristea has been working with Richard Hamilton since 1977 and the Alan Cristea Gallery is the exclusive distributor of his prints worldwide. This exhibition will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue which includes an extract from the artist's forthcoming, as yet unfinished, autobiography.

The Alan Cristea Gallery is the largest dealer and publisher of 20th-century and contemporary prints in Europe, publishing works by the very best international artists as well as regularly showing paintings, works on paper, ceramics, sculpture and installations.

Visitor information:
Gallery open 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm Sat
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