

## Ben Johnson Paintings

18 November – 23 December 2010  
Private View 17 November 6 - 8pm

The Alan Cristea Gallery at  
31&34 Cork St. London W1S 3NU  
Telephone +44(0)20 7439 1866  
Facsimile +44(0)20 7439 1874  
Email: [info@alancristea.com](mailto:info@alancristea.com)  
Website: [www.alancristea.com](http://www.alancristea.com)

### Press Release

*'Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.'*

Opening line from Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*



Ben Johnson's first solo exhibition of paintings at the Alan Cristea Gallery opens in November. Johnson, who is best known for his highly detailed, panoramic cityscapes, has created a new series of paintings of half-real, half-imagined interiors.

Johnson's influences include the Bauhaus, Russian minimalism – Malevich in particular - and the writings of Kandinsky and Klee. He sees art as important to the spirit and the soul; as Kandinsky once said: 'Painting is an art, and art is not vague production, transitory and isolated, but a power which must be directed to the improvement and refinement of the human soul...' Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 1914.

Johnson believes that our surroundings and environment are of the utmost importance in society. He believes that the places we inhabit can 'change the way we think' and that 'we grow through our spaces'. With this in mind he creates paintings which are meditations; they draw in the viewer through the use of perspective and hold the gaze. They are constructed rooms, perfect examples of design, of form and structure. And yet they are always empty – it is the spectator who is invited to inhabit these spaces.

To coincide with his exhibition at the Alan Cristea Gallery, Johnson has an exhibition in Room 1 at the National Gallery, London, opening on 8 December. Here he will be completing a view of London as seen from the roof of the National Gallery, looking out across Trafalgar Square. This vista has much in common with Canaletto's *Stonemason's Yard* which will be exhibited at the same time. Johnson completed a similar cityscape of Liverpool in 2008 which attracted over 200,000 visitors. It is now in the collection of Liverpool Museums but is being lent to his exhibition at the National Gallery in December, along with a panorama of Zurich.

Johnson was born in 1946 in Llandudno, Wales and studied at the Royal College of Art in London. He has exhibited extensively in Europe and the United States and his work is held in many public collections including the Tate, the V&A and the British Museum in London, the Pompidou Centre in Paris, the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam and the Special Administrative Regional Government of Hong Kong. He lives and works in London.

#### Notes to Editors:

**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  
31 & 34 Cork Street, London W1S 3NU  
0207 439 1866 [info@alancristea.com](mailto:info@alancristea.com)

#### Press information:

Julia Huff - Theresa Simon & Partners Ltd  
020 7734 4800 - 07729 930 812  
[julia@theresasimon.com](mailto:julia@theresasimon.com)