

## Malcolm Morley

### *Seven Paintings*

4 March – 10 April 2010

It is with great pleasure that Xavier Hufkens announces the new exhibition of Malcolm Morley. It comprises seven new oil paintings made by the artist in 2008 and 2009.

On view in these paintings are Morley's signature subjects, ships and old airplanes. The artist bases his work on models and found or remembered images that he paints to dramatic effect in unnatural colours. His objective is to achieve a rhythm, abstraction, the expressive power of the canvases or to be more precise, the way in which he transfers his keenly observed images to the canvas via the act of painting. Upon close inspection, each square centimetre of Morley's paintings is nothing less than a small masterwork. Through a combination of sensuousness and intellect the artist develops a metalanguage, as it were, of painting.

Motocross for Morley is a modern form of mythology, replete with heroes who brave danger and death, and also have their flaws and Achilles heels. His motocross paintings fit the realistic painting style based on photo-journalism that he developed in the 1960s to great critical acclaim. Morley's technique is based on rendering details. Each digital image is subdivided into a grid of small squares that are transferred to the canvas one by one. Using this technique the artist achieves an extraordinary pictorial intensity. Dynamic images fragment into mosaics of small abstract paintings, in which there is no longer a distinction between background and foreground. In the words of the artist himself: 'It's much more difficult to make an abstract painting that is real than an abstract painting that is abstract.'

The paintings in the exhibition embody a tension between reality and abstraction. *Blue Boyz* (2008) and *Ring of Fire* (2009) engage the expressive nature of painting through a sculptural bulge. *Thor* (2008) slips into an abstract, flat representation of the elements of the picture. The paintings emphasise the artistic objectives in Morley's oeuvre and demonstrate his technical and substantial mastery over the things and events that he records in paint.

Malcolm Morley was born in London in 1931. He studied at the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts and the Royal College of Art. Since his first show in New York in 1957, he has had countless exhibitions in Europe and North America and took part in international exhibitions, including Documenta 5 and 6. His first retrospective in Whitechapel Art Gallery earned Morley the honour of being the first to receive the Turner Prize for British artists. Further exhibitions include an overview of his watercolours in the Tate Gallery, Liverpool (1991), a solo exhibition at the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1993), a travelling exhibition in the Fundación La Caixa in Madrid and in the Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst in Oslo (1995-96), and a retrospective exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London (2001). In 2006, Morley's work was shown in the retrospective *The Art of Painting*, curated by Bonnie Clearwater in the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami. Morley's work is included in museum collections across the world.

**Xavier Hufkens**

Sint-Jorisstraat 6-8 rue Saint-Georges  
Brussel 1050 Bruxelles  
T 32 (0)2 639 67 30  
F 32 (0)2 639 67 38  
info@xavierhufkens.com  
www.xavierhufkens.com