



MILLENNIUM COURT ARTS CENTRE
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Exhibition Press Release

Ian Cumberland: Once Removed

Opening Night Reception: Friday 5 August, 7-9 PM

6 August – 24 September 2016

Artist Talk: Saturday 3 September, 2-3 PM

Millennium Court Arts Centre is delighted to present *Once Removed*, the first solo exhibition in Ireland by Irish visual artist Ian Cumberland. Cumberland is known for his stunning large oil paintings, particularly his award winning 'heads' and has been awarded the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's ACES funding for the development of this new body of work.

Once Removed is a modern day tale of consumerist alienation and the 'society of the spectacle' where authentic social life is replaced with its representation leaving little beneath, a process that has accelerated in the age of social media and selfies. The painted works ruminate on the individual, their understanding of self, and the disparity between appearance and reality. To do this Cumberland produces tightly framed magnified, fleshy faces ('heads') that meet the viewer's eye and works depicting solitary figures confined in a series of uncanny domestic spaces. Instances of the surreal punctuate the work.

The beautiful, youthful figures of Cumberland's cast appear fixated on superficial attractiveness. They exude glamour but their perfection is belied by a mottled complexion and malaise. Some appear at a remove, reflected in mirrors, which have a long association in art history, not least as indicators of the illusory nature of painting itself, but also vanity, and in the mid twentieth century, psychoanalytic self-recognition. Even the surreal black holes that absorb the pictured inhabitants are mirrored, like the surface of smart phones or tablets. These scenes possess a hallucinatory stillness and are heightened by the artist's vivid use of colour and attention to detail – in fabrics and carpets.

Cumberland's paintings are technically brilliant and realistic in style. The painted surface performs a sort of alchemy that transcends the photographic source material, making this symbolic depiction of the contemporary condition more, not less believable and absorbing. Cumberland also explores painting's mode of presentation through complex installations as well as producing new sculptural installations (including the recurring black hole motif) that mark a departure into three-dimensional work.

About: Ian Cumberland (b. 1983) is an Irish Visual Artist. He studied Fine Art at the University of Ulster, Belfast where he was awarded the John and Rachael Turner Award for the most outstanding student in their field. Cumberland has gained a national and international reputation for his large scale award-winning 'head' paintings. In 2010 he won the Davy Portrait Award, in 2011 he was placed third in the prestigious BP Portrait Award as well as winning the Ireland-US Council and Irish Arts Review Portraiture Award at the Royal Hibernian Academy.

NOTES TO EDITOR: The artist is available for interview. For more information contact Exhibitions Officer Geraldine Boyle, geraldine@millenniumcourt.org / Direct Line: 0044 2838 396072



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