

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

504 West 22nd Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10011
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For Immediate Release

PACO POMET

Montaigne's Nightmare

September 10 – November 6, 2010

Opening reception: Friday, September 10, 6-8 PM
EXTENDED THROUGH NOVEMBER 13, 2010

Monya Rowe Gallery is very pleased to announce the first New York solo exhibition of paintings by **Paco Pomet** titled *Montaigne's Nightmare*.

Pomet's new series of paintings continues to reference Vintage photographs as the primary source for the subject matter. Subverting the original image by adding a surreal edge allows each painting to oscillate between fiction and reality. In *El Becario* (2010), a historical picture of a banal office scene is transformed into a witty psychological caricature. A man's face, comically distorted, unabashedly stares at the viewer making it unclear whether the viewer is being ridiculed, or if the artist is ridiculing his own self-awareness.



Image: Paco Pomet, *El Becario*, 2010, oil on canvas, 15.75 by 15.75 inches

A similar predilection for irony is present in *Fable* (2010), a vintage photograph (c. 1870) depicting a group of Russian Cossacks proudly showing off their kill (a dead tiger) is turned into a farcical display. Pomet challenges and questions the masculinity associated with hunting by replacing the men's faces with those of cartoon-like catheads. In doing so, the hunters become submissive, loveable and cute. Pomet uses humor as a vehicle to alter original pictorial motives, and deny its affirmations. Whimsical pop-culture references are often paired with war and politics. The artists' propensity for deformation- physical, optical and compositional- forces the viewer to think about the pictorial space and decipher what is real or imagined.

The title of the exhibition, *Montaigne's Nightmare*, is inspired by the French Renaissance thinker Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). Popularly thought of as the father of Modern Skepticism, Montaigne's essays were an amalgamation of serious intellectual theory merged with casual anecdotes. In the same way Montaigne embraced a democratic and humanistic approach to writing, Pomet also embraces a similar attitude. The playful veil in Pomet's paintings initially sparks a light-hearted reaction, but sublimated beneath the façade are strong echoes of social denouncement often set within a melancholy landscape. Themes of loneliness, existentialism, sexuality, struggle and class permeates throughout Pomet's paintings, and imagery associated with war and capitalism is common. The title of the exhibition also obliquely relates to Francisco De Goya's (1746- 1828) etching, *The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters*. In this etching, Goya presents a self-portrait with his head resting on a table and buried into his arms while owls and bats seemingly haunt him. In this same spirit, Pomet frequently employs a sinister and absurd attitude to create a visual language that dissects reality within seemingly conventional spaces.

PACO POMET received a Fine Arts Degree (1993) from *Universidad de Granada*, Spain with an Erasmus Exchange (1992) at *Loughborough College of Art & Design*, United Kingdom, and completed a Stop Motion Animation course (2004) from the Continuing Education Program at *School of Visual Arts*, New York. His work has recently been exhibited at *Muralla Bizantina*, Cartagena, Spain, *My Name's Lolita Art*, Madrid, Spain and *Monya Rowe Gallery*. Pomet lives and works in Granada, Spain.

Upcoming: LARISSA BATES, November 18 – January 15, 2011

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11 - 6 PM

For more information or images please contact the gallery at 212 255 5065 or info@monyarowegallery.com

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