

## Press Release

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**Justin Mortimer**

**Breed**

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19 July – 21 September 2019

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Private view:

Thursday 18 July, 6-8pm



Justin Mortimer, *Breed 6*, 2018  
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 213 × 183 cm.  
© Justin Mortimer 2019. Courtesy Parafin, London

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Parafin is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Justin Mortimer, his third with the gallery. Mortimer is widely regarded as one of the leading painters working today and is an emblematic figure for a younger generation of artists.

Mortimer's new work builds upon the 'Hoax' series exhibited at the Armory Show, New York, in 2018. In the 'Hoax' series Mortimer subverted and reimagined the genres of still life and flower painting, creating fragmented depictions of dead and dying flowers juxtaposed with fluidly abstract backgrounds (originally derived from the chromatic striations of cracked plasma screens). The series was both a meditation on mortality – a contemporary form of *vanitas* – but also addressed the dialectic relationship between abstraction and realism in painting. In his new works Mortimer continues to investigate the still life theme but with two crucial new developments. These new paintings are vastly enlarged and for the first time combine spray painting with Mortimer's characteristic brushwork.

By scaling up his compositions to a monumental size Mortimer produces an extraordinary visual dissonance. We are confronted with natural objects, flowers, leaves and vases, depicted in paint at many times their actual size. Secondly by using fine spray paint in his works Mortimer produces a cognitive rupture between areas of the image that appear to be out of focus and the foreground motifs which then assume vivid clarity. The relationship between figure and ground is problematised. On close inspection the illusion of pictorial reality breaks down as the marks and brushstrokes and clouds of fine paint that constitute the image are revealed.

Mortimer has long been fascinated by the way visual information is mediated by technology. His new works are flower paintings for the twenty-first century, complete with ruptures and glitches to remind us that the image – a photograph translated into paint – is derived from a screen and always several steps removed from reality. A 'hoax' is a form of deception and Mortimer's flower paintings offer a paradoxical tension between realist painting, illusion and our understanding of the physical object before us; pigment on canvas.

Moreover, by calling his new paintings 'Breed', Mortimer points not only to the types of plants depicted, often bred to enhance particular characteristics, but a kind of proliferation, an endless replication, not only of natural forms but of images too.

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Justin Mortimer (b.1970) lives and works in London. Recent solo exhibitions include The Factory, London (2017), Djanogly Art Gallery, University of Nottingham (2015), Parafin, London

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(2015, 2017), Future Perfect, Singapore (2015) and Haunch of Venison, London (2012). Recent group exhibitions include 'A Man Is A Man To Another Man: Eder, Gerboc, Mortimer, Szucs', AJG South Bohemian Gallery, Czech Republic (2018), 'Diamonds in The Rough', Ferenczy Muzeumi Centrum, Hungary (2018), 'The New Frontiers of Painting, Fondazione Stelline', Milan (2017), 'Disruptive Imagination', Gallery of Fine Arts, Ostrava (2017), 'Blow Up: Painting, Photography and Reality', Parafin, London, (2015), 'The Nude in the XX and XXI Centuries', S|2, London (2015), 'How to Tell The Future from the Past', Haunch of Venison, New York (2013), 'Nightfall', MODEM Centre for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrecen, Hungary (2012) and the 2011 Prague Biennial.

Mortimer has been awarded several prestigious awards including the EAST Award (2004), NatWest Art Prize (1996) and the BP National Portrait Award (1991). His work has been included in a number of important recent surveys of contemporary painting, including *Landscape Painting Now* (2019), *The Anomie Review of Contemporary British Painting* (2018), *A Brush With The Real: Figurative Painting Today* (2014) and *Vitamin P2: New Perspectives in Painting* (2011). Mortimer's work is in numerous private and public collections internationally.

## Editor's Notes

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## Parafin

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Parafin was launched in September 2014 and is located at 18 Woodstock Street, just off New Bond Street. Parafin represents a broad selection of contemporary artists from emerging names to established international figures.

## Gallery artists

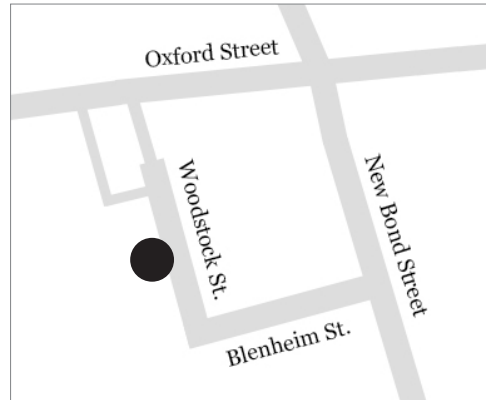
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Fernando Casasepere	Nathan Coley
Hamish Fulton	Tim Head
Nancy Holt	Hynek Martinec
Melanie Manchot	Justin Mortimer
Katie Paterson	Hiraki Sawa
Indrė Šerpytytė	Alison Watt
Hugo Wilson	Uwe Wittwer
Flora Yukhnovich	

## Woodstock Street, Mayfair

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Woodstock Street is located on the northern edge of Mayfair, London, between New Bond Street (via Blenheim Street) and Oxford Street. Parafin is situated near to the historic tiled Art Deco entrance of auction house Bonhams.



## Opening Hours

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Tuesday–Friday, 10–6  
Saturday, 12–5  
Or by appointment

[www.parafin.co.uk](http://www.parafin.co.uk)  
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