

TOM HUNTER

Unheralded Stories

24 November – 15 January 2011

In this new series of photographs Tom Hunter continues his exploration of the local. Hunter continues to investigate the lives and histories of the people in his neighbourhood of Hackney, East London. He reconstructs stories, memories and myths to paint a psycho-geographical landscape. Such unheralded stories become immortalised in these photographic works, giving new meaning to how we interpret our environment. Taking inspiration from great tableaux painters such as Eugène Delacroix and Andrew Wyeth these stories are retold using the local people of Hackney and the landscape they inhabit. The art historical themes of epic storytelling and the human form are woven together by Hunter to create a portrayal of the human struggle with the modern day urban environment in his series *Unheralded Stories*.



Death of Coltelli

Whereas Delacroix sets out to create epic mythical tales such as *Death of Sardanapalus*, retold in Hunter's *Death of Coltelli*, Wyeth puts the human into the landscape, evoking

the sublime. In *Anchor and Hope* a girl is seen crawling through long grass looking across the River Lea to an Upper Clapton council estate. This image refers back in time to when the whole estate was fighting eviction. The battle to stop the bailiffs went on for many days, with the estate being barricaded by burning vehicles to keep out the police and bailiffs. This monumental battle fought between an unseen group of residents and the local authority to gain control over social housing has become myth-like in the history of Hackney. By evoking the gestures and mannerisms of Wyeth's painting *Christina's World*, Hunter is borrowing the language of a great American mythmaker.



Anchor and Hope

Hunter continues the tradition of the great raconteurs taking it home to his local parks, streets and houses, giving his neighbourhood a sense of grandeur and the epic. This forms part of a twenty year endeavour to explore history, place and alternative ways of occupying the environment.

Born in Dorset, Tom Hunter moved to Hackney in 1986. He graduated from the London College of Printing in 1994 and from the Royal College of Art in 1997. He is currently Senior Research Fellow at the London College of Communication.

Tom Hunter first came to critical attention with *Persons Unknown* in 1999. A series of narratives, *Living in Hell and Other Stories* drew on scenes from East London and headlines from his local newspaper – Hackney Gazette. Solo exhibitions include *Life and Death in Hackney*, White Cube, London, 2000; *Living in Hell and Other Stories*, National Gallery, London 2005-06 (where he was the first artist to have a photography show); *Flashback*, Museum of London, 2009-2010. Collections include National Gallery, London; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Saatchi Collection.

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