

JAMES MORTIMER



Fish Head, Edition of 9, Bronze, 43cm Height

Front Cover: Goat Landscape, 183 x 244cm, Oil on Canvas

James Mortimer

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CATTO GALLERY

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"I consider it a great success if a piece wavers somewhere between high art intellectualism and saucy postcard." So says artist James Mortimer. His new collection is a great success. It features many allusions to the lofty achievements of renaissance painting. It's full of big ideas delivered with technical panache.

It also features a man with the lovely pair of ripe jackfruits. And there is James in a nutshell (sort of). He is one of the British art world's rising stars. Why? Because his work is fabulous and unique. But also because, unlike most of the po-faced contemporary art scene, it's such fun.

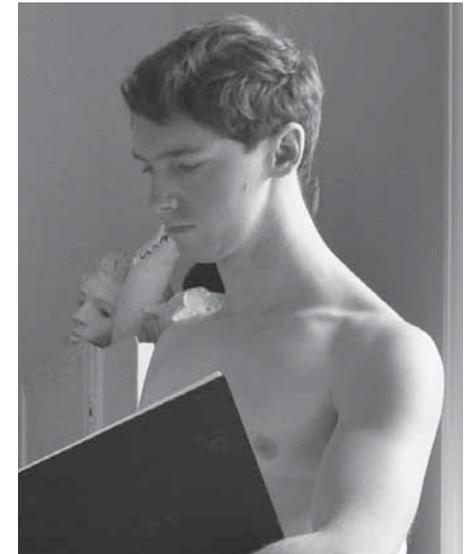
The same goes for James himself. His official photo typically features him in his studio, sketchbook in hand, bare-chested, sucking on a pipe. He describes his working method as follows: "I usually begin a new series of work by drinking a large glass of something and chain smoking cigars. Then, when I'm completely relaxed, I sit down and sketch furiously."

James may not take himself too seriously. But we should. He is a true original whose first show at the Catto in 2015 was an immediate sell-out.

Though largely self-taught, James has painting in his blood. He's a descendent of the 18th century neo-classical painter John Hamilton Mortimer, and studied sculpture to degree level. He's a scholar of Michelangelo, Picasso and – surprisingly – Duchamp. But he admits much of his inspiration comes from his travelling experiences. He has journeyed as far as Mongolia and Costa Rica and says: "I think the boredom in travelling, you know, the sitting in trains and planes and doing a lot of waiting is quite helpful. Just letting your mind wander."

These reveries help James create a captivating alternative universe in his paintings and sculptures. Generally, the works feature naked or semi-naked figures in lush landscapes. These characters are frequently grappling crocodiles, dogs and other wild beasts. But they don't seem too phased by the obvious danger in their midst. Or by the succulently phallic fruit hanging over their heads.

It's a pleasure to visit this universe – a place of wonder and fascination, where ideas, wit and technical skill come together. In a world of boring conceptual art, this is contemporary work you can lose yourself in.



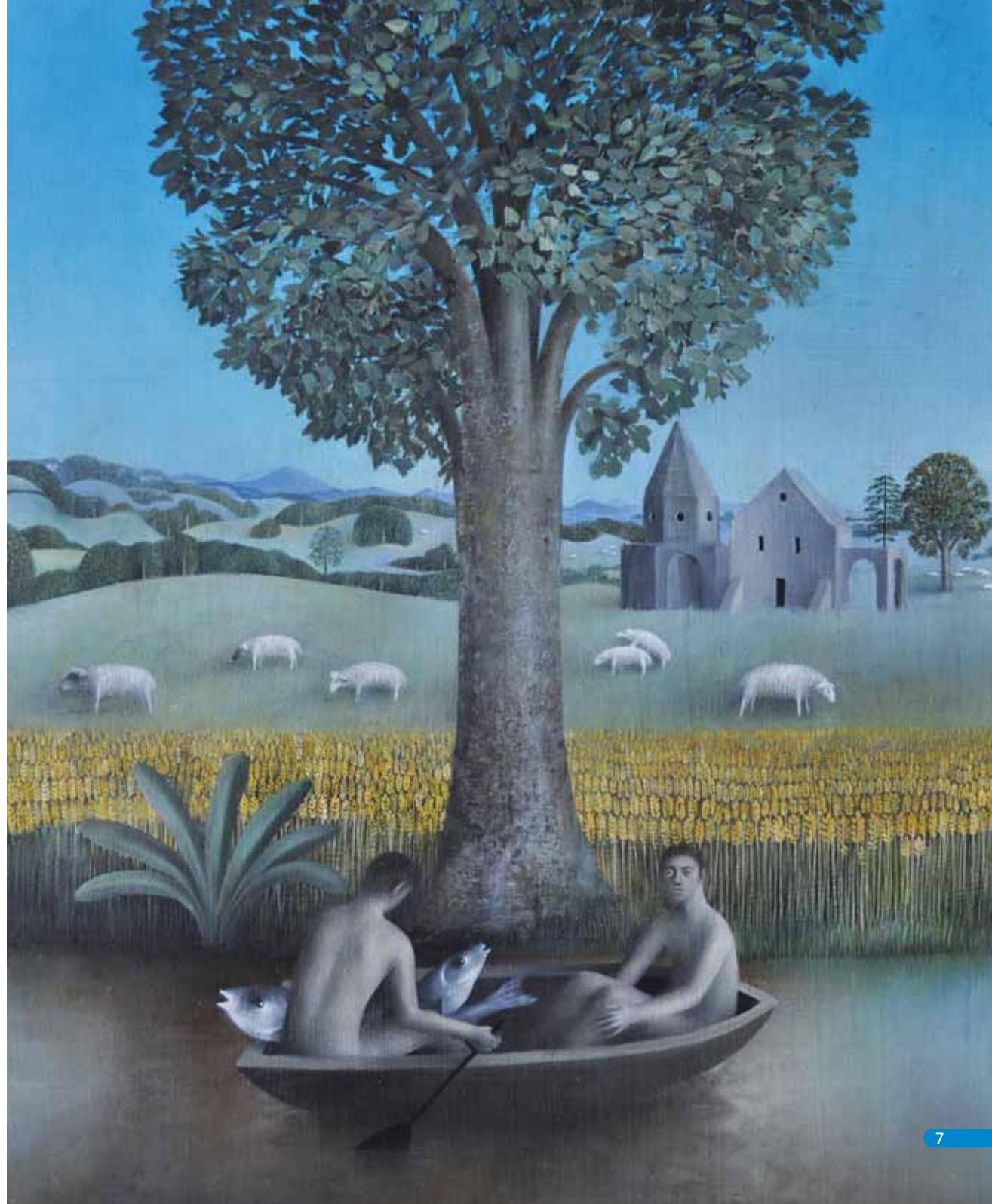
The Tiled Room 153 x 122cm, Oil on Canvas





Peacock Woman 40 x 30cm, Oil on Canvas

Fishing and Sheep 50 x 40cm, Oil on Canvas

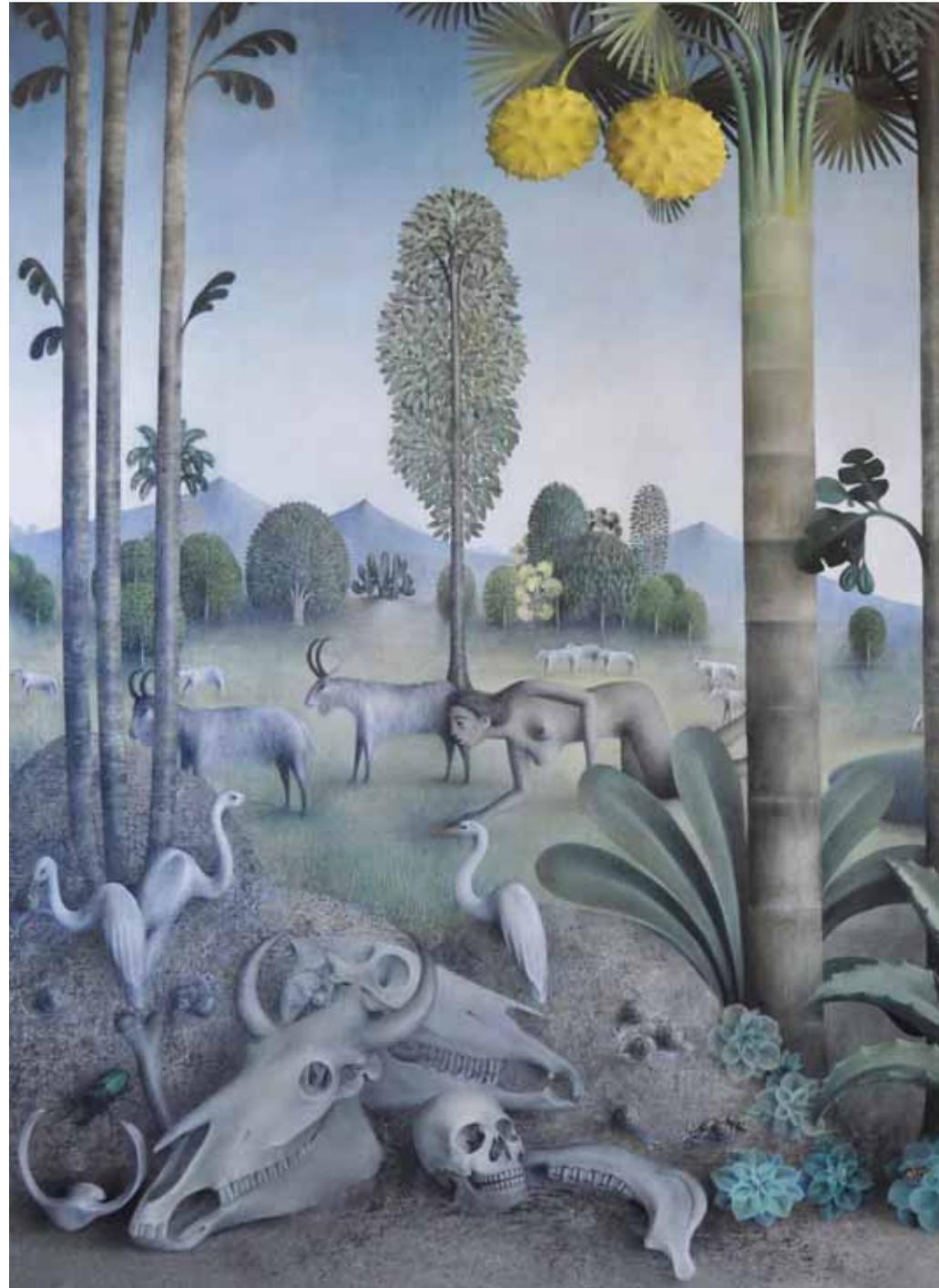




Crocodile Head, Bronze, Edition of 9, 105 cm Height

House on River 102 x 76cm, Oil on Canvas



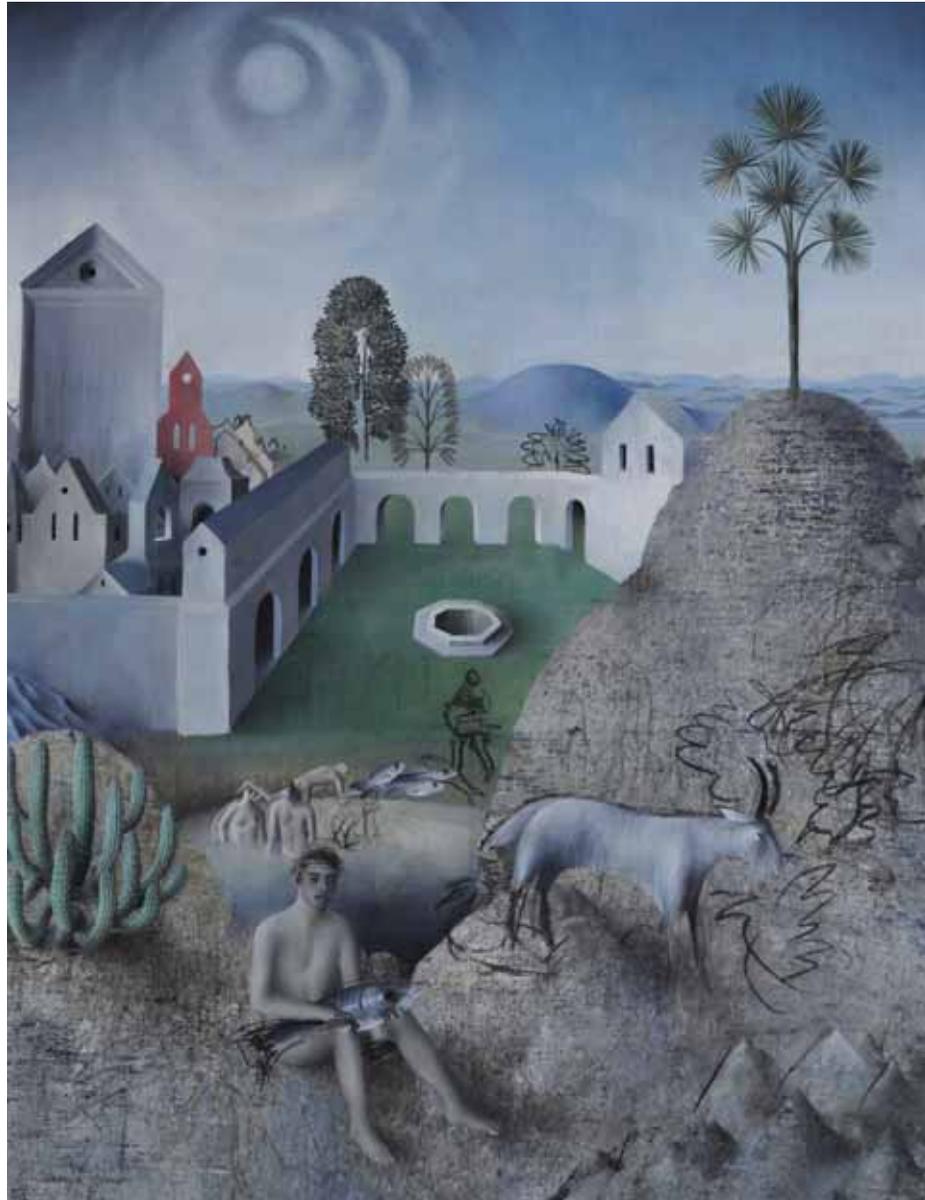


Goat Landscape (with details) 183 x 244cm, Oil on Canvas





Two-Headed Peacock, Edition of 9, Bronze, 127cm Height



Courtyard (work in progress) 120 x 91cm, Oil on Canvas



Animal Vase, Ceramic, Height 61 cm, Diameter 39cm



Central panel of Water Triptych (work in progress) 84 x 74cm, pen & ink
Total width of framed Triptych will be approx. 183cm



Boxers, Edition of 9, Bronze, Height 40cm

Punch Up 153 x 122cm, Oil on Canvas

