

## Dark reflections

Austrian artist **Philip Mueller** discusses the meaning and inspiration behind his latest exhibition 'My Father Was Many and I Am Happy As A Sailor' with *Peter Feely*

Meuller, who is still in his twenties, creates art which, as his exhibition's name suggests, takes people on a journey, like a sailor on a voyage. His work is playful, surreal and dark, reflecting his search for the truth, his sense of humour, experiences and the influence of his environment and dreams. The cacophony of messages in his oil paintings are echoed by Mueller's desire for people to interpret the work for themselves, disregarding his own personality.

Here, we get an explanation of his rationale and why he thinks his paintings look as they do.

**What is your creative process?**

It's less a creative process – more of a romantic reflection of everything around me.

**Your work appears almost violent in some senses – is that a fair observation?**

The scenes of violence shown in my paintings are more theatrical satire than the real violence I see when I go out on the street.

**Would you describe your work as dark?**

Actually, I would describe my work as happy with a black humour element – not sarcastic but pointed.

**There's a surreal aspect to your work – almost dreamlike – is this deliberate?**

The surreal aspect in my work may be the most important aspect, because

I think that removing the realism from everything is the most honest thing in life.

**Explain the title of your exhibition and why you decided to include your father.**

I used my father for part of the title as a metaphor for all of the figures – dead or alive, real or invented, which I chose as my guides through the labyrinth of life.

**Your work has an idiosyncratic aspect – is this a reflection of the world around you or does it have a separate meaning?**

Everything is a reflection of the world, even dreaming, and everyone's dreams are different. I am dreaming while I am working.

**How would you like people to react to your art or do you not care?**

I want people to not ask me about the stories in my paintings and I like it when they look at the work, then come over to me and tell me their interpretation of what the painting said to them. It doesn't matter if it's positive or negative because then the work is talking to them and not me.

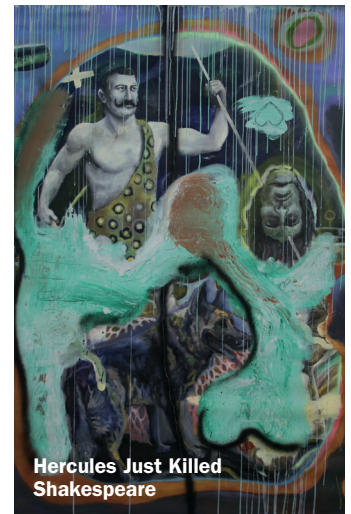
**Your painting Jonny, Philis & Mentos has a playful, almost humorous element to it – is this intentional and do you think there is an element of wit to your work?**

Yes, nothing I create is made without

a sense of humour and laughter.  
**Would you say that your art is in any way macabre and are you afraid of mortality?**

I come from Vienna, where there's a sense of macabre all around, which is communicated through everything. But I am not afraid of mortality.

**THE LOWDOWN**  
Exhibition: 'My Father Was Many' and 'I Am Happy As A Sailor' until September 6 at Carbon 12, Alkersal Avenue, Al Quoz (04 340 6016).  
Artist: Philip Mueller  
Price range of works: On request



Hercules Just Killed Shakespeare



Dean After-Life



Jonny, Philis & Mentos

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