

DALE LEWIS *Full English*

May 11 – June 30, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 11, 6-8PM

Anna Zorina Gallery is pleased to announce *Full English*, the first U.S. solo exhibition of London-based artist Dale Lewis. This will be the artist's first exhibition with the gallery. The show features his latest mural-sized oil paintings that depict scenes from his own life. The artist unleashes the personal stories with stream-of-conscious immediacy as a means of preserving the vivid impressions that have been ingrained in his memory. By not retouching and refining the work over time, Lewis captures a more honest portrayal of his subconscious as well as documenting the disorienting effects of time on recollection.

Ask for a Full English in the UK and you will get a bountiful plate of fried breakfast food. Dale Lewis has other plans though. In his titular painting, the artist serves up a scene of unsavory debauchery fueled by copious amounts of sex, beer and cigarettes. The artist is portraying his working-class friends and family, exposing their carefree attitude and refusal to live as they are told. The artist manipulates the title to suggest a culturally ingrained lifestyle rather than the typical once-a-week occurrence of an indulgent breakfast. The large canvasses confront the viewer and allow for a more gradual recognition of the disparity between what is expected and what is actually presented.

Lewis incorporates the compositions of major historical paintings into each of his works to create a merger between high and lowbrow. The *Full English* painting is based on Thomas Couture's "*Romans in the Decadence of the Empire*," a 19th Century work that also depicts a tangle of drunken partiers. Couture frames the central depravity with figures that look on with scorn as a means of instilling his own moral standing into the piece. However, Lewis does not include these elements of judgment into his works. Instead by presenting an impartial perspective, he transfers the critical role onto the viewer. Although the base of the compositions may be tied to the past, the method of sociological observation is thoroughly contemporary.

Dale Lewis was born in London, 1980. Lewis received an MFA from University of Brighton (UK) in 2006. He is a recipient of the 2016 Jerwood Painting Fellowship. In 2016, Ken Johnson highlighted Lewis's work in a New York Times article that distinguished the top eight booths at that year's NADA New York. His paintings are represented in numerous prestigious private and public collections including the Saatchi Collection, Susan and Michael Hort Collection and David Roberts Art Foundation.

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