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Simon Henwood

Inside, all summer long

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This is the first solo show from Simon Henwood (°1965) in Belgium, which will consist of recent pieces from Henwood's ongoing *There for the Grace of God* series combined with some new interiors and works from the last two years.

For the last ten years Simon Henwood has focused on portraits of teenagers and children. This series of large gouaches (two of which feature in the show) were first shown at the ICA in London in 1998. Original planned as a - "fifty strong series of child portraits called taught" (see article - Kids Loco – The Face October 1998) – there are now over 150 works completed since then.

These portraits originally had an immediate street style informality, often bold, graphic and colourful. As the series progressed Simon added a more formal element and widened his choice of subjects to include older teenagers – often painting the same subject over a number of years. (See the book Kido)

Over the last two years Simon has become increasingly interested classical portraiture and in particular - the sometimes more grotesque subjects of Goya and Ingress. This has in turn led him to work more extensively in the medium of oil paint.

For the ongoing project *There For the Grace Of God* - he explores the idea of failure and the perverse encouragement that surrounds/accompanies those who think they could be famous.

Working from found negatives (and making his own prints as reference) - the subjects are drawn mostly from actors of the 1960's. All anonymous, but all driven and encouraged to be known.

In this show Simon presents the first of the actress's in the series – along with some more unusual actors that "never were". There are around 100 portraits planned in this series, of which there are just over 20 completed so far.

"A painter of spoiled adolescents and humanoid blobs, an illustrator of sanguine gothic tales fro children, an animator of fantastical visions of worlds eerily like our own but not close, a publisher of indie magazines that bring together the cacophony of voices that hover between the marginal and the traditional, a collector of high and low cultural artefacts and an ever growing media presence who neither bites nor strokes the hands that are feeding this uber-producer: Simon Henwood"

CHRISTIAN HAYE (Writer/curator Frieze)