

Press Release
PANORAMA
Nicolas Party
19 June - 26 July 2015



Opening Thursday 18 June 2015, 6-10pm

SALTS is pleased to present *PANORAMA*, the first institutional exhibition in Switzerland by Brussels-based Swiss artist Nicolas Party. Party's installation takes inspiration from the history of the panorama, a 19th century phenomenon that preceded cinema and served in many Western cities as an entertainment device. Often a large-scale painting depicting an extensive and detailed view of a particular subject, a panorama would typically show natural landscapes, military or historical scenes on a circular or semi-circular board.

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From 1880 the official standard size was 114 meters circumference by 14 to 15 meters height. Such an endeavour would require a custom-made architectural environment to be effectively displayed. Today only few of the originals remain intact. Lucerne's Bourbaki *Panorama* (1881), painted by Edouard Castres with the help of many others, including Ferdinand Hodler, is a prime example of such a technique, and considered Swiss cultural heritage.

For SALTS, Party transformed the outdoor exhibition boxes into a single large-scale cube, where the new construction takes the shape of a four-sided canvas allowing for a 360-degree outdoor painting. Similar to a cinema set design, the new structure is a *trompe l'oeil* comprised of painted wood panels that entirely mask the existing exhibition space.

Serving as a background for the night of the opening, Party's new take on the panorama changes its fundamental principle, insofar as the viewer can only achieve a partial sight of the work from any vantage point. One has to walk around the square structure to see each of the four sides and understand the whole. Working site-specifically, Party reacts to SALTS' garden and outdoors with great ease; his long interest in graffiti and large-scale wall paintings and low-fi technique is merged here with the highbrow aesthetics of a classical portrait gallery. Characteristic of his trademark formal humour, Party turns the gallery inside out, blasting the walls full of his iconography, while leaving the inner exhibition space untouched. On view are a series of caricatures of the typical faces and figures that populate the artist's pictorial world. Further pushing odd dichotomies, Party's monochromatic panorama simultaneously refers to the *Grisailles* technique and Hergé's *Tintin* inside covers, where all of the characters are portrayed in varied tones of blue.

Generating a landscape out of his own practice, Party expands his usual motives—the teapot, the genderless face, the fruits—to produce a complex layering of genres and styles, which offers an opportunity to re-evaluate the medium of painting from both a formal and historical point of view.

Nicolas Party (b. 1980, Lausanne, Switzerland) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. Party studied at the Lausanne School of Art (2001-2004) and at the Glasgow School of Art (2007-2009).

Selected solo exhibitions include: 'Boys and Pastel', Inverleith house, Edinburgh (2015); 'Two Naked Women', Kaufmann Repetto, Milan (2015); 'Pastel et nu', Centre culturel suisse, Paris (2015); 'Trunks and Faces', Westfälischer Kunstverein, Muenster (2014); 'Landscape', Kunsthall Stavanger, Stavanger (2014); 'Pastel', Gregor Staiger, Zurich (2014); 'Still Life oil paintings and Landscape watercolours', the Modern Institute, Glasgow; 'Dinner for 24 Dogs', Salon 94 Freemans, New York (2012); 'Still Lifes and Big Naked Women', Gregor Staiger, Zurich (2012); 'Still Life, Stones and Elephants', Swiss Institute, New York (2012); 'Still Life, Gold and Peeling Paint', ReMap 3, Athens (2011); and 'Dinner for 24 Elephants', The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2011).

We would like to thank Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council, for their generous support.