

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BEN TOUR: ELECTRIC ORPHANS

Toronto, Canada, December 30, 2008—Meta Gallery is pleased to present *Electric Orphans*, new works by Toronto born artist Ben Tour. Working primarily in a figurative style and drawing inspiration from artists such as Schiele and Bacon, with influences ranging from illustration to graffiti and urban art in general, Ben's work takes the viewer on a journey, one that more often than not ends where it began – within ourselves.

Often taking a minimalist approach to the people he portrays, and without any distinct narrative element, only the bare essentials remain. Stripping away imagery that might detract from the raw emotive power of the human form at our highest (and lowest) moments lends itself to displaying the uncanny ability that Tour has to capture subtle nuances of a wide range of emotional states with a fine degree of accuracy. What results is a deeply authentic depiction of the universal vulnerability that is the human condition, and seeing ourselves in the artist's work inspires in its worst moments, sympathy and pity, and in its best, compassion.

While experiencing the work the viewer is confronted with glimpses into the private moments of what appear to be complete strangers – yet somehow, underneath the morose glare of a lost young woman or the regretful watery eyes of a man too old to be so sad, familiarity lurks.

This paradoxical effect of the mysterious-yet-somehow-deeply-familiar is a common theme throughout the artists work. Of course we could never know what they think, nor are we meant to. In a way Ben's works act as a blank screen, our very own tabula rasa onto which our own discomforts, our darkest secrets and deepest fears, and humanity at its most humbled states are projected. In the strongest examples, the paradox of the mysterious vs. the familiar resolves itself as we begin to realize that the people Ben portrays in his work and their accompanied emotional baggage is in fact, our own.

Ben Tour was born in Toronto, Ontario in 1977. After graduating from Sheridan College's Illustration program in 2000 Ben moved to Vancouver where he continues to make his art. His work has been shown in galleries from Vancouver to New York, Miami to Hamburg and within the past three years has had major solo exhibitions in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and San Francisco. His work has been featured in the publications *BLK/MRKT One* and *BLK/MRKT Two*, *Juxtapoz* and *Two Faced: The Changing Face of Portraiture*. He lives near Vancouver, British Columbia with his wife Dawn and their son Jasper.

Electric Orphans will be on view from January 9 to February 15, 2009. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11-6 and Sunday from 12-5. The opening reception will be on Friday January 9 from 7-10pm. Artist in attendance.

For additional information please contact Jody Polishchuk at 416.955.0500 or jp@metagallery.com.