

EDWYNN HOUK GALLERY

PRESS RELEASE

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PAOLO VENTURA *ECLIPSE*

21 September – 11 November 2017



Edwynn Houk Gallery is pleased to announce our representation of Paolo Ventura and the artist's inaugural exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition opens on 21 September and continues through 11 November, 2017.

Paolo Ventura, born in Milan in 1968, grew up with storytellers. His father was a popular author of children's books, while his grandmother told memorable tales of living in the Italian countryside during World War II. Ventura has developed his own inventive approach to narrative, blending two forms of

storytelling—one inspired by historical events and the other entirely fictive—with a creative technical approach that has earned him widespread recognition.

Each of Ventura's photographs involves multiple steps. The process includes building and painting simple sets, dressing and directing actors, and combining photographs of the two in a unique topographic reality. Lovers, soldiers, and jesters are some of the recurring characters, often played by family members, including his twin brother, son, wife, and himself. In this present exhibition, Ventura collages and hand-paints over every image. The resulting tableaus engage each other in dialogue, but each exists as its own imaginative world.

Ventura's work is characterized by a delicate and complex balance. His images are photographic yet appear painterly; familiar yet dream-like; historical yet modern. Even his artistic inspirations, which are as varied as surrealist painting and Neorealist cinema, find equilibrium in his work. Most importantly, Ventura's sense of genuine curiosity is contagious. When Ventura hears a story, he is known to exclaim with excitement, "No way! Really?," as curator Bill Hunt wrote in an essay on Ventura's work for *Aperture Magazine*. His photographs invite viewers to share in this spirit of discovery. Seen collectively, the series of images loosely tells a story, as if the artist is drifting from dream to dream, enveloped in the theatrical sets of his own imagination.

Ventura's work has been exhibited in museums and private galleries worldwide, including at the Italian Pavilion of the 2011 Venice Biennale. Solo exhibitions include Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome; The Hague Museum of Photography; Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, Charleston, SC; and MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome. His work is included in notable public collections including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; the Lowe Art Museum, Miami; and the Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.