

# Flash Art

**RYAN MOSLEY**  
ALISON JACQUES - LONDON



RYAN MOSLEY, *Here Lies the Artist*, 2009. Oil on canvas, 210 x 275 cm. Courtesy the artist and Alison Jacques, London.

Ryan Mosley's paintings depict theatrical scenes both comic and grotesque: dancing cowboys and bearded banjo players strike a tuneful mood undercut by uncomfortable portrayals of limbs with large afro hairdos, and faces covered by disturbing masks. Danger lurks everywhere, despite the bacchanalian atmosphere, with snakes coiling across the tableaux while cacti grow recklessly, at times almost filling the canvases. While mostly recognizable as human, Mosley's

characters turn anatomy upside down, with aces hidden or entirely absent, while a snake is given a garish clown face and a gramophone horn is turned into a grinning flower.

Mosley was included in "New-speak: British Art Now," the recent Saatchi exhibition at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, though this is his first major solo show in London, offering a chance for visitors to fully immerse themselves in the Mosley world. His works actively reference art history — Hogarth, Gauguin and Degas particularly spring to mind — and also encourage literary parallels, with one painting of a skull jokingly titled *Yorik'd* (2009-2010). Yet, any realism that may be found in these citations is lost in Mosley's hallucinatory visions, which probe at the darker edges of the human consciousness, where our most manic and irrational thoughts lie.

*Eliza Williams*