

PAUL KASMIN GALLERY

MARK RYDEN
The Art of
Whipped Cream
May 19 – July 8, 2017



Paul Kasmin Gallery is pleased to present **Mark Ryden: The Art of Whipped Cream** on view at **The Arnold and Marie Schwartz Gallery Met**, 30 Lincoln Center Plaza, from May 19 – July 8, 2017. The exhibition will feature drawings, sketches and paintings created for the production of **American Ballet Theatre's Whipped Cream**. A concurrent exhibition of Ryden's work for the ballet will be held at **Paul Kasmin Gallery** located at 515 West 27th Street, from May 20 – July 21, 2017.

The exhibition will coincide with American Ballet Theatre's New York premiere of *Whipped Cream* at the Metropolitan Opera House (May 22 – July 1 2017), featuring choreography by Alexei Ratmansky with the original 20th-Century score by Richard Strauss. Ryden conceived backdrops, props and costumes for the ballet, all of which retain the artist's meticulous attention to detail and intricate craftsmanship seen throughout his oeuvre.

Originally titled *Schlagobers*, the Austrian word for whipped cream, the production adapts a rediscovered Richard Strauss ballet from 1924 that centers on a boy who, after overindulging on treats at a pastry shop, falls into a state of delirium in which his candy confections come to life. Drawing from this narrative, Ryden further delves into the darker undercurrents of sweetness, from its sugary excesses to the intoxicating effects of overindulgence.

Character studies in oil on panel, as well as graphite on paper, introduce a peculiar new collection of characters to Ryden's fantastical world. *Princess Tea Flower* (2016), the personification of pink and green flowering tea leaves, carries herself in a classical ballerina pose. Ryden's beloved Snow Yak reemerges from its 2008 namesake *The Snow Yak Show* in *Whipped Cream* as an eye-catching character donning the beautiful *Princess Praline* in her procession scene. Throughout the various sets and backdrops designed for the ballet, *Snow Yak* materializes as symbols incarnated, as well as in a schematic sketch of

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the two-person costume design. Introducing characters from previous bodies of work, Ryden blurs the boundary between ballet's status as a product of high culture and its place in the wider contemporary cultural imagination.

In its review of the ballet, *The New York Times* praised Ryden's work:

The subject matter is kitsch, not because it's fantasy but in the word's original sense of mass-produced popular art, culture marketed for shopping. And yet this production is a triumph of stylishness. Sets (several in each act) and costumes by Mark Ryden are fantastic in color, line and detail. Ultrasweet kiddie-type cuteness is constantly invoked – there are giant toys, a carriage horse played by two dancers, and cupcake children – but so much careful affection is evident that kitsch is both triumphant and transcended.

Mark Ryden (b. 1963, Medford, Oregon) is known for his hauntingly beautiful and masterfully executed oil paintings that encompass contemporary mythologies with fairy-tale creatures, historical figures and pop cultural icons. Ryden received his BFA from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 1987.

This past year, Ryden's work was the subject of his first major European retrospective held at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga in Spain. It is the museum's most widely attended exhibition to date. Previous solo exhibitions include a mid-career retrospective *Wondertoone!* at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, which traveled to the Pasadena Museum of California Art (2004-2005); *Dodecahedron*, at Paul Kasmin Gallery (December 2015); and *The Gay 90's: Old Tyme Art Show* at Paul Kasmin Gallery (Spring 2010). Recent museum exhibitions also include Juxtapoz x Superflat at Pivot Art + Culture in Seattle, which traveled to Vancouver Art Gallery (2016); *Takashi Murakami's Superflat Collection* at the Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan (2016); and *The Artist's Museum: Los Angeles Artists 1980-2010*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (2010).

Mark Ryden has been represented by Paul Kasmin Gallery since 2009. *The Art of Whipped Cream* marks the artist's third exhibition at the gallery. He currently lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

Gallery Contact

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Mark Ryden
"The Art of Whipped Cream" continues at:

515 West 27th Street
New York, NY 10001

Image details

Mark Ryden
Princess Tea Flower, 2016
Oil on panel
17 x 11 inches,
43.2 x 27.9 cm
24 x 18 inches, framed
61 x 45.7 cm

Photo courtesy the artist
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