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Goff + Rosenthal is pleased to present “Silver Spoons and Dirty Grooms”, the first solo exhibition of the work of London-based artist Simon English in the United States.

Simon English emerged onto the London art scene in 1994 with his first-ever solo show of large scale paintings at the Saatchi Gallery, part of "Young British Art 3". More recently, he has become known for large and small scale works on paper which have been described as being "painted drawings" and fit somewhere between the two. English uses drawing as, in his words, “a unique engine in which to power and fuel the subject of the work across the blankness of the empty page.” The work is deeply rooted in literature, British history and the artist’s rich personal and familial history. In Art in America of January last year, Ana Finel Honigman stated that English "resurrects lost images, connects loose references and makes beauty from pictorial chaos."

Says English: “It is a pre-photography art that stays close to writing and the journey of the imagination.”

The most remarked on element of English’s work is its *Englishness*. The drawings are a complicated matrix of literary references such as Christina Rossetti and Byron, of acerbic double-entendres, bawdy jokes and skewering wit, pastoral country house fantasies and distinctly urban pursuits such as orgies and gay cruising. Each work has its own internal logic, in which supposedly “high” and “low” become flattened into one scene encompassing a multiplicity of perspectives and desires. The content is both sad and comic, both prudish and perverse, in a way that is distinctly English: it is truly arsenic and old lace.

In “The Bachelor’s Wedding (A Suitable Match)”, the title comes from two romantic novels by the Mills and Boon author, Betty Neels. It refers not only to a small painting of that title that pre-supposes a wedding between Lord Byron and Lady Lamb but equally refers to the coupling of drawing sheets and the weaving of separate stories within the large scale works, taking an ironic nod at "English suitability". “It is a cacophony of different voices, songs from the past, notes from the present and rattlings of desire,” says English.

In "Jemima Puddleduck", he imagines an encounter between characters from Beatrix Potter and Michel Tournier's “Gemini,” in which they enter a forest at the same time , embarking on synchronized stories involving eggs, nests, the meeting of strangers and the eventual " innocent and experienced" entrance to the woodshed.

In “Silver Spoons” the symbol of the egg, and specifically a Faberge-like egg, recurs. “These eggs,” says English, “are large bold forms that carry bejeweled narratives upon their back. Eggs abound, from the ‘Nest egg’, a fictional story of embezzlement that makes reference to Robert Maxwell and rogue trading both in business and art to the ‘Parsons egg’ and its acknowledgment of polite society in the face of a rotten egg.”

In 2005, English’s work was included in the "Contemporary Erotic drawing" show at the Aldrich Museum in Connecticut and his monograph "Simon English and the Army Pink Snowman" (Black Dog Publishing) was released by with extensive essays from Bill Arning and Stella Santacatterina. He has had solo gallery exhibitions in London, Berlin, Zurich and, most recently, in Paris at Agnes b.’s Galerie du jour. His work is in the collections of Agnes b., France, The Louisiana Museum, Denmark, The Falkenberg collection, Hamburg, The Arts Council of Great Britain, The British Museum, The Paisley Museum Scotland and the Saatchi Collection, London, among others.