

Pop, Funk, Bad Painting And More

Sep 20, 2019 — Jan 26, 2020 | Musée des Abattoirs, Toulouse, France

This exhibition, the first retrospective of this magnitude by the artist in France since 1999, covering his career since the late 1950s through to the present day, brings together around a hundred works (paintings, graphic arts, etc.), many previously unseen, as well as a collection of archive materials.

Surprisingly, his career began in Paris in the early 1960s. This was where the artist created his first artworks reproducing superheroes, comics, and everyday objects from the “American Way of Life”. Peter Saul’s work expresses the quintessence of American art. Thousands of kilometres from the epicentre of Pop Art, a movement he affirms he does not belong to, while sharing its themes, Saul offers a more critical dimension of it, questioning both the consumerist and imperialist models. Upon his return to the United States in 1964, he moved to California, the home of “Funk” art, with which his pictorial, pop, and surrealist work found an echo. The work of Peter Saul proved at once unique and groundbreaking, anticipating some of the major movements in painting. Pop in a different vein, dazzling Funk, his art is a new way of making historical painting with the colours and clashes of today, just as his way of rewriting the masterpieces of painting prefigures Bad Painting and its success in the 1980s. Consistently attentive to the chaos of the world, the America of “celebrity” presidents from Reagan to Trump, but also the environment, junk food, cigarettes, etc.

Peter Saul has consistently revealed the most sensitive issues in the world and the art world, which continues to make him one of the major painters of 20th and 21st century art history and one of the most influential on the young artistic scene today.

The visitor will discover his exuberant and colourful way of representing the history and culture of the world and of the United States, including his focus on reinterpreting the history of art. His correspondence and interviews will constitute useful resources for analysing his unique career, which builds bridges between European and American art.