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PRESS RELEASE:

John Copeland solo exhibition to be presented at Newport Street Gallery in February 2018

Newport Street Gallery will present an exhibition of work by American artist John Copeland (b.1976), opening on 21st February 2018. This will be Copeland's first UK solo exhibition. The exhibition – 'Your Heaven Looks Just Like My Hell' – will feature twenty-five paintings, dating from 2009 to 2017, taken from the Murderme collection.

Veering between representation and abstraction, Copeland's paintings feature tactile, impasto surfaces, rendered in oil and acrylic paint. Professing an interest in 'any arrangement that involves interaction between the figures', Copeland often situates his subjects in social settings – around a table, playfully balanced on one another's shoulders, or surveying a painting as a group. The figures remain, however, deeply ambiguous, and are set against abstract backgrounds populated by curious, amorphous shapes. The unnerving quality of the imagery is heightened by the appearance of pairs or mirrored human forms, as in *The Bullet Screams Past* (2015).

Copeland's habitual use of familiar art historical motifs – the nude, the table and the skull, for example – allow him to explore the complications inherent to image-making and representation. The Brooklyn-based artist describes the content of the canvases as a '*starting point for a conversation or a digression... like a riddle or a bit of a poem [that] raises questions that aren't really answerable*'. He works from a plethora of found sources, usually photographic; mid twentieth-century magazine cut-outs, Americana and biker imagery among others. His work is, in large part, an exploration of the 'act of looking'. He states: '*I'm concerned with the dynamic between surface and undercurrent, myths and realities. All of my work plays with the act of viewing and being aware of the act of viewing, in terms of our collective visual culture and the images we see with every day.*'

Coinciding with this show is a solo exhibition of work by British artist Rachel Howard also at Newport Street Gallery.

Notes to editors

About John Copeland

Copeland was born in California in 1976, and went on to attend the California College of the Arts, and in 1998 he received his BFA.

Recent solo exhibitions include: 'Wolves Wait At Your Door', V1 Gallery, Copenhagen (2016); 'You'll Never Be The Same', Galleria Marabini, Bologna, Italy (2012); and 'Old Glory', Nicholas Robinson Gallery, New York (2009).

Recent group exhibitions include: 'Nude', V1 Gallery, Copenhagen (2017); 'The Brask Collection meets Willumsen', J.F. Willumsens Museum, Frederikssund, Denmark (2017); 'Salon Djurhuus', Munkeruphus, Denmark (2016); 'Bad Painting', John Copeland & Katherine Bernhardt, V1 Gallery at Spinnerei, Leipzig, Germany (2013); 'Summer Reading', The Hole, New York (2013); 'Hell Raisers', Galerie Lange + Pult, Zurich, Switzerland (2012); 'Wonder Works, Master Works from Private Danish Collections', The Museum Of Modern Art Aalborg, Denmark (2012).

The artist lives and works in New York City.

About Newport Street Gallery

Newport Street Gallery opened in Vauxhall, south London, in October 2015. Spanning five buildings, the gallery presents solo or group exhibitions of work drawn from Damien Hirst's extensive Murderme art collection, which he has been building since the late 1980s. Hirst's interest in curating dates back to the beginning of his artistic career and his organisation of the groundbreaking 'Freeze' exhibition in south London in 1988.

The gallery is the realisation of Hirst's long-term ambition to share his extensive collection of art – which includes over 3,000 works – with the public. In October 2016, the gallery was awarded the respected RIBA Stirling Prize for the UK's best new building of the year.

Entry to all exhibitions is free.

For media enquiries about Newport Street Gallery please contact:

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Newport Street Gallery

Newport Street, London, SE11 6AJ

www.newportstreetgallery.com

Opening times

Tuesday – Sunday 10am – 6pm

Closed Mondays

Please see website for details of bank holiday opening times.

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