

---

## GILBERT & GEORGE

---

20 LONDON EAST ONE PICTURES

PARIS DEBELLEYME

12 Saturday - 24 Saturday

---



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to present the latest works by Gilbert and George, the charismatic figures from the world of contemporary art.

Everyone knows that there are two of them, but they tend to be considered as just one artist, representing both the subject and the object of their work. "When there are two of you, you can never have any feelings of self-doubt," they repeat, whilst adding, "we like the image to have a real in-your-face quality about it, and we want people to be affected after viewing our works\*." Or "infected", as the case may be with these latest works, where Gilbert and George share centre-stage with crabs on street signs bearing the names of the roads around their London home: Public Places / Pubic Lice.

Their silhouettes sometimes appear to adopt almost comic-like postures: it is the war of the crabs, with their magnification adding to the fear that they instil. In other works, their bodies have a ghostly appearance or are headless, as if on the road to destruction or fading away. The microscopic world emerging victorious over the macroscopic world. The graphic style draws on the format used for their initial works in the 1970s: a nameless style, a neutral photographic technique, a presentation in the form of standard signs and a restricted colour code (white, black and red). It could be said that we are at the height of tropism in art with Gilbert and George.

Don't get us wrong, there is no irony in these works: Gilbert and George's art is intended to change things, albeit subversively. This latest series continues with their exploration of an infra-world (the series on excrement, spit and blood molecules have already been presented at Galerie Ropac in 1998 and then at Fiac in 2000). In this case, pubic lice symbolise the world of the infinitely small, living and teeming amidst the crowds of people bustling along Charing Cross Road and Fournier Street. Figures that are frozen, as they can be seen in these postures, and attacked by these parasites. Gilbert and George claim to be advocates of a form of art that speaks to everyone indiscriminately: they have become the object of their works like human symptoms, "living sculptures" set on glazed paper: "The artist is the canvas, and that is what we are becoming."

Gilbert and George will represent England at the next Venice Biennial in 2005. In 2007, an exhibition devoted to their work will exceptionally take over the entire fourth floor of the Tate Modern in London.

George was born in 1942 in Devon, England. Gilbert was born in 1943 in the Dolomites, Italy. They met at Saint Martin's School of Art in London in 1967, where they defined an aesthetic quality of life, far removed from the formalist criteria of the art taught within its confines. From 1967 up to 1976, they appeared in museums and galleries as "living sculptures", including their famous performance of "Underneath the Arches". In the 1970s, photography took an important place in their work with the famous 1972-74 series on alcohol, where their predominantly red stylistic identity took shape. In 1975-76, they moved to their house in Fournier Street, in the heart of London. Gilbert and George's work has been exhibited in the world's most prestigious galleries, including a major and audacious retrospective in 1998 by the Paris Museum of Modern Art. Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac represents the artists in France and Austria.