



**Dawn Mellor**  
*Vile Affections*

**Saturday 29 September – Sunday 28 October 2007**

For the past ten years, Dawn Mellor has been painting portraits of celebrities, consciously misrepresenting, sexualising and violating imagery culled from photographic portraits, gossip magazines, film stills and the internet. The combination of imaginative sadistic cruelty, satire and empathy could be seen as communicating something about the use of both individuals and groups as scapegoats onto which unwanted fears and anxieties are projected. Mellor states that "The paintings of this fashioned minority group of camp icons are vulnerable to my own diarist situations... overloaded collusions of identity, bombardment of consumerist products and imagery, psychological trauma, political and financial impotency and so on as a catalogue of felt experiences of the isolation, frustration and anxiety of the urban condition." The melodramatic camp humour deployed celebrates a long tradition of camp as a tool of resistance to oppression, particularly within Queer culture and imaginative violence is presented as a cathartic source of pleasure.

*Vile Affections* has been specially conceived for the exhibition, responding to the gothic architecture of Studio Voltaire's former chapel space. The exhibition will include a series of portraits of various public figures. Alongside subjective experiences, the works also reference religious martyrdom, contemporary news media, historical Western portrait painting, the narratives of Dante's Inferno and Sartre's No Exit.

For the opening night of *Vile Affections*, artist Mike Stokes will present a new fashion collection for spring/summer 2008 that will be performed by models and inspired by the vamp and the art collector. Drawing from historical religious painting, behavioral psychology and popular culture, Stokes' practice reassembles aspects of our culture, taking both damning and celebratory positions in order to question that same culture. "*It wasn't so much a catwalk, more a path she took and upon which she carved up her rivals and spat them out with pleasure*".

**About the artist:**

Mellor lives and works in London. She has had recurring solo exhibitions at Team Gallery, New York; Victoria Miro Gallery, London; Il Capricorno, Venice and Galerie Drantmann, Brussels. She has participated in various group exhibitions including: Yvon Lambert, New York (2007); *Defamation of Character*, PS1, New York (2006); *Expanded Painting*, Prague Biennial (2005) and *Remix: Contemporary Art and Pop*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool (2002). The artist has a forthcoming solo exhibition at Team Gallery, New York in April 2008, where the artist is represented.