

— Josh Dorman
The Naming of Things



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John Martin Gallery



—*Island*, 2009, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 122x127 cm, 48x50 ins, £11,000

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9 November – 1 December 2012

John Martin Gallery

38 Albemarle Street
London, W1S 4JG

T +44 (0)20 7499 1314
info@jmlondon.com

Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 11-4
www.jmlondon.com

I generate fields of visual detritus, then bury and re-excavate, wander between flesh, feather, metal, bone, rock.

Everywhere, I forage for peculiar old books – like a hunter, or a botanist. I find disused knowledge in diagrams, charts, in engravings of animals unseen by their portrayers and viewers.

I float in a Turner sky, scale a Persian miniature mountain, add bricks to Bruegel's tower, perch upside down with Klee's yellow birds, march past pink castles in Sassetta's procession, ride on Ryder's murky racetrack. I'm not ashamed that these are my worlds—they aren't old at all.

The living ferns I find stain skeletal fractal forms on old maps. Gears, mushrooms, coroneae and cells mesh, echo, power machines or hover weightless.

We travel down aimless roads and cross bridges to somewhere. We bury the past in layers of earth. As we will be buried, flooded, dismembered, forgotten, misremembered. These missing pages might remind us, help us make new histories, give us somewhere beautiful to get lost.

— Josh Dorman, 2012



— *This Broken World*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 86x92 cm, 34x36 ins, £7,200



— *Missing Pages*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 92 x 86 cm, 26 x 26 ins , £4000

The map pieces are tantalizing, elusive works. They are difficult to describe, almost impossible to pin down in words, and yet they hold our attention in the same way that stories do. So much is going on in them that we feel compelled to look for a narrative, as if by "reading" the images before us we could finally grasp them in all their complexity. But the story I will read in one of these pictures is not the same story you will read. More than anything else, that singularity of response attests to the charm and power of these works. On the one hand, they are exuberant, almost child-like in their energy. On the other hand, the dominant feeling they provoke in us is one of reflection, of meditation. There is no solution to the mystery. As Dorman put it in a recent letter to me: "Ultimately, I paint to find out why I have to paint...in order to see things that wouldn't exist if I didn't make them. But I feel satisfaction only when I am genuinely surprised by what happens. As Braque once said: 'There is only one thing in art of any value-that which cannot be explained.'"

— Paul Auster, Cue Foundation Exhibition, 2004



—*Cresendo Island*, 2005–2011, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 96x122 cm, 38x48 ins £11,500



—*Tower of Babel*, 2008, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 231 x 127 cm, 91 x 50 ins £22,000

The deeper you venture into Dorman's vision the deeper underwater you go: your senses shorted, your logic cut loose. The apprehensive apparatus you've learned to trust lose their use. Your body that receives, your organs that sort and substantiate experience – these are revealed as the blunt, bent instruments they are: approximate and, in important ways, arbitrary. Why sight like ours, in this range, according to these dictates of line and form? Why this angle of access from vision into mood? From symbol into signification? Why this object and not that? In his layerings, Dorman creates a universe of objects that are, as in our universe, coexistent but never apprehensible in toto. He uses a visual language which he goes on to render nonsensical.

— Nam Le, from catalogue introduction, 2011



—Overview, 2011 ink, acrylic and antique paper on six panels, 101 x 185 cm, 40 x 72 ins £16,000



— *O'er the Straits*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel 66 x 66 cm, 26 x 26 ins £4000



— *Leap of Faith*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 46x46cm, 18x18ins £2,600



—*Myrtle*, 2011, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 61 x 61 cm, 24 x 24 ins £4000

Dorman begins with old maps; he ends with new worlds. The magic of the transmutation is nine-tenths craft and nine-tenths what Keats's termed a negative capability: an artist's ability to be in the midst of uncertainty and mystery without any irritability reaching after fact and reason. I want to speak to both assets possessed by Dorman, since each is exceedingly rare and neither alone a sufficient cause of artistic greatness.

Dorman can draw and paint with exquisite dexterity. The elements are executed with stunning precision and composed in such a way that an infinite number of groupings – visual plots and subplots – suggest themselves while relaxing, at last, into a satisfying consummation. However fanciful the landscape, the images are fastidiously rendered, and thus one can always orient oneself to the whole by taking one's bearing from the beautiful at hand. Though we seldom recognize where we are geographically, we know the composition knows where it is aesthetically; and in that felt faith in the arrestingly realized we are set free to try on new kinds of locations.

— Michael Verde, 2010



—*Hybrids*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 46 x 46 cm, 18 x 18 ins £2600



—*Susquehanna*, 2011, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 51 x 46 cm, 20 x 18 ins



—*Reversal in A Minor*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 46 x 46 cm, 18 x 18 ins £2600



—*Thistle*, 2011, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 83 x 53 cm, 33 x 21 ins £4850



—*Abridged*, 2012, ink, pencil, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 46x61 cm, 18x24ins £3200



—*Poem II*, 2007, pencil, gouache on paper, 20 x 25 cm, 8 x 10 ins



—*Poem I*, 2007, pencil, gouache on paper, 20 x 25 cm, 8 x 10 ins



—*Little Babel*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 46x46 cm, 18x18 ins £2,600



— *Closer Look*, 2007, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 53 x 84 cm, 21 x 33 ins £4850



— *Leap of Faith*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel, 46x46 cm, 18x18 ins



— *Cellular*, 2012, ink, acrylic and antique paper on panel 66x66 cm, 26x36 ins £5600



—Drawing, 2011, pencil on paper, 10 x 25 cm, 4 x 10 ins



—Drawing, 2011, pencil on paper, 10 x 25 cm, 4 x 10 ins



—Drawing, 2011, pencil on paper, 10 x 25 cm, 4 x 10 ins

JOSH DORMAN

1966 Born Baltimore, Maryland.
1984-88 Skidmore College, New York
1992 MFA Queen's College, N.Y

SOLO EXHIBITIONS SINCE 2000

2012 *The Naming of Things*, John Martin Gallery, London
Koplin Del Rio Gallery, Los Angeles,
2011 *Lost Divers*, Mary Ryan Gallery, New York
2010 George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles
2009 *Josh Dorman: New Paintings*, Mary Ryan Gallery, New York
2008 *Within Four Miles: The World of Josh Dorman*, Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles
George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles
Babel, Mary Ryan Gallery, New York
2007 George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles, Oxbow Gallery, Northampton, MA Pierogi, Brooklyn, NY Hallwalls, Buffalo, NY
2005 George Billis Gallery, Los Angeles, *Lost Travels*, Cal State Long Beach, Long Beach, Lake George Arts Project, Lake George, NY
2004 CUE Art Foundation, New York selected by Paul Auster
2003 55 Mercer Gallery, New York St. George's School, Hunter Gallery, Newport, Rhode Island
2002 *New Works on Old Paper* Quincy University Gallery, Quincy, Illinois
2001 55 Mercer Gallery, New York Wolf Group, New York
2000 55 Mercer Gallery – New York

COLLECTIONS

Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio
International Collage Center, Milton, Pennsylvania
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, New York, NY
Memory Bridge Foundation, Chicago, Illinois
The Naples Museum, Naples, Florida
Progressive Auto Insurance, Chicago, Illinois
Springfield Art Museum, Springfield, Missouri

RECENT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2012 *I'll Take You There*, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, NY
Selections from the International Collage Center, Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, Missouri

Wildly Human, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

2011 The Tang Museum, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
Fragments: Modern and Contemporary Collage, 1915-2011 ACA Galleries, New York, NY
2010 *Cabinet*, John Martin Gallery
Art on Paper 2010, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina
Mapping: Memory and Motion in Contemporary Art, Katonah Museum of Art, Katonah, NY
2009 *The Map as Art*, (curated by Kitty Harmon), author of *The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography*, Princeton Architectural Press, 2009
2007 *The Art of Collage*, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, NY; The Palmer Museum of Art, Penn State University
Here, There, Everywhere, Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2012 Art and Auction Magazine
The Los Angeles Times--- Leah Ollman
2011 The Post-Star, Saratoga Springs—Doug Gruse
2010 City Arts—Mario Naves
The Village Voice—Robert Shuster
Time Out New York—Michael Wilson
2009 Harmon, Katherine. *The Map as Art: Contemporary Artists Explore Cartography*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2009.
2008 Art News—Alex Taylor
The Los Angeles Times—Leah Ollman
Hrushetska, Maryna. *Within Four Miles: The World of Josh Dorman*. Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA, (Exhibition publication)
2006 Art New England — Lisa Amato, August/September
The New Yorker — Goings On About Town (12/26/06)
The New York Observer — Mario Naves
The Baltimore Sun — Glenn McNatt
2005 The Week Magazine
The Buffalo News — Richard Huntington
The Los Angeles Times — Leah Ollman
L.A. ArtScene — Jody Zellen
Metroland News — Albany, NY
The New York Times — “The Nature of Things” at the Islip Art Museum, Helen Harrison
Art Forum online — Critics Picks, John Reed, (CUE Foundation show)
The New York Observer — Mario Naves, Nov. 22 (CUE Foundation show)