

PRESS RELEASE

**JUSTIN ADIAN**  
**STRANGERS**  
 14.10 – 22.11.14



*Fortunate Son*, 2014, oil enamel and canvas on ester foam, 52 x 65 x 6 inches  
 (132.1 x 165.1 x 15.2 cm.)

Skarstedt London is delighted to announce *Strangers*, the first U.K exhibition by American artist Justin Adian. The exhibition will feature a series of new paintings and will coincide with Frieze London. *Strangers* is a meditation on Adian's relationship with his works and the transformation that occurs once they have left the familial environment of the studio to venture out in the world: "Once something leaves the studio it changes, kinda moves onto its own life, its own scene."

The exhibition will include 10 abstract, shaped paintings in Adian's unique style of canvas stretched over ester foam. Often combining two or more abstract forms into one piece to create a three-dimensional composite wall relief, the surface of the canvas is painted using industrial materials such as oil-based enamel and spray paint. Demonstrating the influence of

Minimalism in his approach to colour, Adian adds a further dimension to several of the works by painting their reverse surfaces with bright colours which reflect onto the supporting wall to create a 'back lit' effect. In *Fortunate Son*, the glow emanating from behind into the surrounding space emphasises the painting's slanted cross form, a significant symbol from the artist's youth referencing "the cross of the church and the X from punk rock."

While Adian's formal practice is inspired by numerous artists, including Richard Tuttle, Eva Hesse, Lynda Benglis and Richard Prince, an early supporter of his work, he identifies specifically with the humour that is present in much of the art from Texas and the West. In his paintings, there is a notable playfulness in the shapes he fabricates with foam as well as his choice of brightly sprayed colours. This humour is enhanced by the interplay between the works and his choice of titles such as *Bikini* and *Wanna?*

Narrative plays an important role in Adian's work with the inspiration for this series coming from Larry McMurtry's 1972 book *All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers* and Merle Haggard's 1965 song of the same name. Adian resists abstraction by giving each painting a title derived from a narrative he has attached to it. This is exemplified by the corner piece *Texarkana*, in which the title makes reference to where two states, Texas and Arkansas, join: "the title is a portmanteau, a word made up of two existing words and the piece is two elements of one kind trying to join a third."

To accompany the exhibition and catalogue, Adian has written a collection of short stories which demonstrate the emphasis of narrative structure in his paintings: "I have been thinking of the pieces as participants in the same activity. They are all similar, like patients in a lobby waiting for the therapist...they all need to talk but say different things."

Justin Adian will be creating a limited edition artist's book to coincide with the exhibition. Each copy will be hand-finished with spray paint by the artist and will be signed and numbered.

## About the artist

Justin Adian was born in Fort Worth, Texas in 1976 and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Selected exhibitions include Luxembourg & Dayan, New York, NY, 2014; Blackstone Gallery, New York, NY, 2012; Martos Gallery, New York, NY, 2012; Bryant Park, New York, NY, 2010-11; Blackston, New York, NY, 2010; Rachel Uffner Gallery in New York, NY, 2010; Jack the Pelican Gallery, Brooklyn, NY, DepARTment Gallery, Toronto Ontario, HBC Gallery, Berlin, Germany, all in 2009; North Hall Gallery, New York, NY, 2008; and at UNT Artspace, Fort Worth, TX, 2007. He received his Master of Fine Arts from Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of Art, New Brunswick, NJ, in 2003, and his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of North Texas, Fort Worth, TX, in 2000.

## About Skarstedt



20 East 79th Street  
New York NY 10075



550 West 21st Street  
New York NY 10011



23 Old Bond Street  
London W1S 4PZ

Skarstedt was founded in 1994 by Per Skarstedt to mount historical exhibitions by contemporary European and American artists that had become the core of his specialty in Sweden and New York in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Skarstedt's New York gallery is located on 79 Street and Madison Avenue in an historic building, formerly the renowned Rosenberg Gallery. In October 2012, Skarstedt opened its London space on Old Bond Street with the inaugural exhibition *Andy Warhol: The American Indian*. Skarstedt recently opened its 3<sup>rd</sup> space in Chelsea, New York with the exhibition *Yves Klein and Andy Warhol: Fire Paintings and Oxidation Paintings*.

Skarstedt's programme reflects the gallery's established area of expertise whilst also expanding its focus to include museum-quality, historically researched exhibitions from modern and contemporary masters. Skarstedt's unique relationship with artists allows it to present exhibitions both on the primary and secondary markets, creating a dialogue between the generations. Skarstedt is committed to sharing both its aesthetic perspective and philosophical approach whilst working with prominent international museums and private collections around the world.

## Notes to editors

**Exhibition:** *Justin Adian*

**Location:** Skarstedt, 23 Old Bond Street, London W1S 4PZ, UK

**Telephone:** +44 (0) 207 499 5200

**Dates:** 14 October 2014 – 22 November 2014

**Hours:** Tuesday to Friday 10am - 6pm; Saturday 10 am - 5 pm

**Admission is free**

[www.skarstedt.com](http://www.skarstedt.com)