

# ROBERT - STEELE - GALLERY

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## Andrew Stahl

### *Sakura – New Paintings*



*Sakura, 2006/07, Oil on Canvas, 96 x 156 in.*

#### Press Release

**Andrew Stahl | Sakura – New Paintings**  
**8 March – 7 April 2007**

The **Robert Steele Gallery** at 511 West 25th Street between 10th and 11th Avenues in Chelsea is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by **Andrew Stahl**, opening on Thursday, March 8th through April 7th, 2007. A reception for the artist will be held Thursday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, from 6 to 8pm. Also on view in the gallery's Project Room will be paintings by **David Serisier**. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 11 to 6pm and by appointment.

Entitled **Sakura** - the Japanese word for cherry blossoms (and an enduring metaphor for the ephemeral nature of life) - these paintings reflect Stahl's continuing response to his travels and residencies in the Far East. Says Stahl: *These paintings are attempts to describe the intense beauty of the appearance of the world in its labyrinthine confusion, deepened by the speed of contemporary travel and the cross cultural meltdown that occurs... and to recognize all the contradictions and problems that arise in trying to use travel as a source.*

*How is it possible to look at exoticism and romanticism without being naive? How is it possible to include the appearance of a face or body in a painting? How is it possible not to stereotype? How important is it to take the risks of treading close to dangerous boundaries? How is it possible to make expressive and powerful art? How is it possible to make forward-looking art that deals with the future and acknowledges the contemporary issues in painting: How abstract or how figurative? How clever how dumb? How confident how shy? Or perhaps how absent / how present / how dense? How beautiful how rough? How playful / how critical, how big / how small / and how mad can paintings be?*

As **Stuart Morgan** wrote: *A feeling of alienation informs Andrew Stahl's paintings, and also a sense of distortion. This may be the result of distance, real or metaphorical: either that foreignness experienced in places where language, religion and custom are unfamiliar or a private perception of the strangeness of the body and what it means to inhabit it (Stahl hints that the two can be equated). The pretext of these works is travel: the feelings of being lifted like a child and transported effortlessly, with all the resulting distortions. For as space and time conflate, scale becomes meaningless, perception can no longer be trusted and understanding of others diminishes to the point of near incomprehension. In foreign parts, ordinary behaviour and customs have other meanings; even eye- contact seems to serve a different purpose. Adrift in a world of lost connections, the viewer is confronted by large things and small things. Concentrating on either is a mistake. So is trying to understand. For as paintings become notepads, the important and the irrelevant are jumbled ... the odalisques demand attention, but of a different type: submission to a state beyond the quotidian.*

Andrew Stahl has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad. He has received numerous awards, residencies and scholarships including the **Abbey Major Rome Scholarship** and the **Wingate Scholarship**. Following a British Council funded residency at Chiangmai University, he had solo shows at **Chiangmai Museum** (2001), **Silpakorn University** and **100 Tonson Gallery**, Bangkok (2003-4). Other recent solo shows were at **Flowers East Gallery**, London and **Fenderesky Gallery**, Belfast. His work is represented in several major public Collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Arts Council England, the British Council and the British Museum. He is currently the Head of Undergraduate Painting at the Slade School in London.



*Facing the Wave, 2007, Oil on Canvas, 72 x 78 in.*



*Studio view, 2007.*

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