

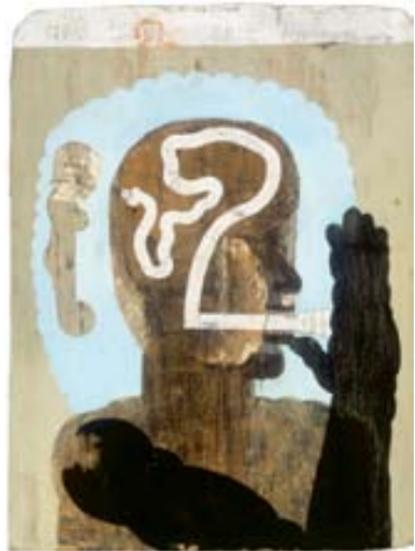
Begin the Begin

Painter Tim Hussey's mid-career retrospective

On flea market-scavenged paper and antique book pages, Tim Hussey swirls, dabs, and drips fluorescent hues over muted shades that morph into familiar but mysterious figures. With every glance, his dark-humored paintings reveal another layer of color, another image, another relative and fading truth. His work confronts self-consciousness and embraces the messiness of relationships, all while posing unanswerable questions about the human



Conduction 7 (2006), mixed media on paper, 12" x 15"



Summer Tie Affair (2000), mixed media on board, 40" x 57"

The December exhibit will include older works shipped from galleries and collectors across the country.



Circle Game (2009), mixed media on paper, 50" x 40"

"Tim has a great sense of the absurd countered by a hunger to find an authentic visual language." —Bo Joseph, NYC painter

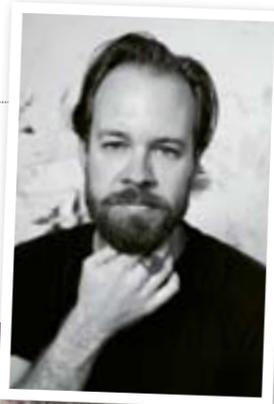
condition. But lately, the question for Hussey is if he can shift his career in a new direction.

To help the contemporary artist look back and ultimately move forward, the City Gallery at Waterfront Park will host "Tim Hussey: Drown Then Swim" beginning in December. In the art world, a retrospective show is normally an honor reserved for the end of a successful career; for 40-year-old Hussey, however, the exhibition marks a turning point. "It's time to take inventory of myself. This show is about looking at where I am as a painter, encapsulating the work of the past 10 years, and saying goodbye to it," he explains.

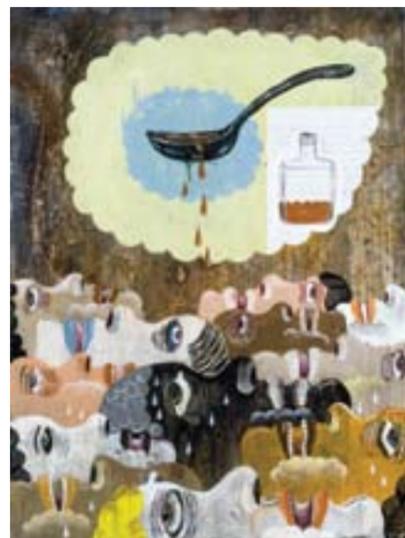
This won't be the first time Hussey has changed directions. Two years before the Rhode Island School of Design grad returned to his hometown of Charleston in 2002, he made the

"terrifying" decision to break away from his editorial illustration career, which had shot-gunned into publications like *The New York Times*, *GQ*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Forbes*. And though *American Illustration* had recently included his piece *Hunger 2* among the "Top 20 Images of the Year," he needed a change. "I decided to can all of that and paint what I wanted."

The leap again landed him in the public eye, this time on gallery walls in Charleston, Atlanta, Nashville, San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York. But as demand for his signature originals exploded, so too did a fear of losing his creative self. "You stop being an artist when you start imitating your own work to please an audience," he says. "I'm happy to have been validated with a certain body of work, but that doesn't



Study of Reclining Nude (2010), charcoal on rag paper, 38" x 50"



Hunger 2 (2000), acrylic & pencil on board, 20" x 26"

mean such work will always be valid to me."

In *Running by Sight*, Adam Boozer's documentary on Hussey's life and art, artist Shepard Fairey empathizes with his friend's need to make peace with past success. "Tim is making a really strong, unique body of work," he says. "And I hope his audience expands without him having to adapt what he's doing to...what's in vogue at the moment."

While Hussey's work will remain in the Holy City following December's show, namely at the Rebekah Jacob Gallery, he plans to spend his time going forward between art epicenters and rural asylums where he can create. "Charleston's been good to me—I'll always show here, but I want to do more," says Hussey. "I feel like I am finally at the beginning of my career." —Kristen Gebrman

"Tim Hussey: Drown Then Swim." City Gallery at Waterfront Park, 34 Prioleau St. December 1-January 15. (843) 958-6484, husseyart.com

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