TimeOut London

Michael Williams: Morning Zoo

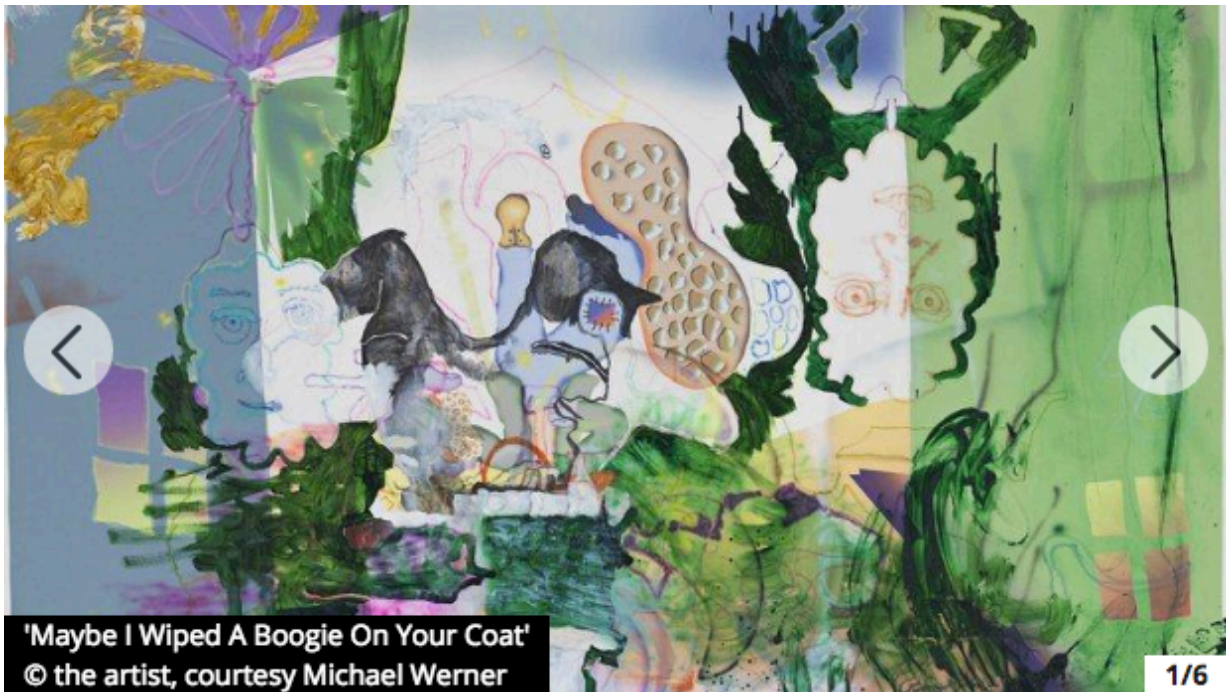'Maybe I Wiped A Boogie On Your Coat'
© the artist, courtesy Michael Werner

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TIME OUT SAYS
★★★★☆

New paintings by the American artist made from Photoshop drawings.

If Robin Thicke has taught us anything, it's that not all lines should be blurred. But in fuzzing the boundaries between computer-generated imagery and more traditional painterly techniques (you know, actual painting), thirtysomething American artist Michael Williams has found lines well worth blurring.

And things really do get blurry. Williams is either splodging on great gobs of thick paint, trampling over his canvases or airbrushing odd shapes all over the place. But at the root of all the big main works – and these are pretty massive paintings – is a digital print. Williams's digital imagery is silly, humorous and surreal. It

looks like the work of a stoned teenager, created at 3am while chonged off his nut, messing around in Microsoft Paint. In 'A Posh Moan' there's a starry-eyed DJ (or maybe a starship captain) being cheered on by a fat drunk in a Hawaiian shirt, a topless skinhead painter with some serious crack in 'Morning Zoo' and a man dancing upside down with what may be a giant peanut in 'Maybe I Wiped a Boogie on Your Coat'. The digital textures all clash, messing with your eyes.

But it's the meeting of computer and painter that works best. The sloppy paint- and bootmarks of that peanut painting, the gentle airbrushing and childish imagery of the brilliantly titled 'Barf Mother' – all of these have their roots in art history, from Pollock to Dubuffet. You quickly realise that these dumb-looking paintings are actually quite smart: big, neon explosions of ideas and experimentation. Get over the tittering and they're brilliant.

Eddy Frankel

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