

Art in America

DECODING IMAGES



Ryan Mosley, Thoughts of Man, 2013

An amply bearded man in a harlequin-patterned jumpsuit holds a shovel in one hand, a scepter topped with a skull in the other. As we look closer, we see that the central figure is ringed by four skulls. A row of heads at the canvas's bottom edge reveals that the man is onstage; the audience's heads are echoed by colorful bunting at the painting's upper edge.

Thoughts of Man is the title painting from Ryan Mosley's first New York solo exhibition, at Tierney Gardarin (through Aug. 9). Born in 1980 in Chesterfield, United Kingdom, and now a resident of London, Mosley has mounted solo shows at galleries including Alison Jacques Gallery (London) and Eigen + Art (Berlin).

- HIDE NOTES

Images of harlequin-patterned clown figures recur in Mosley's work, evoking Picasso. The way that parts of the painting seem to lie in wait and then peek out at you after prolonged looking recalls Bonnard, whose colors also infuse Mosley's surfaces. And his depictions of theatrical settings nod to Toulouse-Lautrec and Degas.

—BRIAN BOUCHER