

# From Kultureflash 204 16/05/07

## ART JOHN RUSSELL

### Matt's Gallery

Ends Sunday 3 June [Wed to Sun 12pm - 6pm]

42-44 Copperfield Rd., E3 T:020.8983.1771 Tube: Mile End **FREE**

London missed out on [John Russell's](#) 2005 solo exhibitions at [Transmission](#) and the [Norwich Gallery](#) but this is now rectified with his first London solo show, the at once thrilling, grotesque, alienating, and awesome [Ocean Pose](#). Super-saturated colour emanates from four 10 x 35 foot backlit vinyl banners depicting a post-apocalyptic world of Man confronting the Infinite. A motley crew of computer-generated characters emerge from the glassy ocean surface -- naked Aryan men, a black baby, a young guy in a wheelchair, a unicorn, an octopus. Are they the remnants of London's futurist global metropolis or nihilistically random? Russell borrows the form of religious allegory, and transmutes it into something bewildering which both evokes and seems on the crest of a new wave of thought. Whilst the philosophical utterings accompanying these tableaux verge on fanatical nonsense, *Ocean Pose* invokes a dizzying array of references tempered by the occasional masturbatory turn that overall demonstrates a wilful opposition to the communicative openness dominating much contemporary art of the last decade. It would seem merely illustrative if the results weren't so mind-scramblingly inconceivable, confusing, distressing, spectacular, prophetic and provocative.  
**NB:** [runs](#) till 03/06.