FAMILY DAY WORKSHOP | SATURDAY 12 APRIL, 2–4pm
A workshop which will offer parents the opportunity to work hands on with their children to create artwork in response to exhibition. Suitable for children aged 3 – 7 years and parents.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION PROJECT
To celebrate Museums and Galleries month in May 2003 the gallery are working with local schools during the period of Inka Essenhigh's exhibition. Pupils will visit the exhibition from 6th May – 23rd May 2003 and create artwork in response to the exhibition in school.

PUBLICATION
A new full colour publication of the artist's work is available from The Fruitmarket Gallery Bookshop. **Special Exhibition Price £12.**

POSTER
An A2 full colour limited edition poster is available featuring *Personal Planet*. **Special Price £1.**

For further information about The Fruitmarket Gallery Education Programme ask at The Bookshop or pick up a gallery bulletin.

In association with Victoria Miro Gallery.
In-kind support provided by Midori and The Howard Hotel.

Scottish Arts Council

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Inka Essenhigh, *Personal Planet*, 2002

EXHIBITION GUIDE

INKA ESSENHIGH

5 APRIL – 24 MAY 2003

Born 1969, Belfonte, Pennsylvania, USA.

This exhibition charts the evolution of Essenhigh's work over the last two years, encompassing the change from earlier enamel-based paints to the more recent oil paintings. The paintings in this exhibition have extended her subject matter, denying the hard flat enamel surfaces of her earlier paintings and investing them with more of a three-dimensional reality. Also included are a selection of Essenhigh's drawings which counterpoint the vivid colourful world of the paintings.

Essenhigh's work is reflective of her ability to unite divergent influences, including the iconography of Italian Renaissance painting, the aesthetic sensibilities of Japanese Ukiyo-e prints, and contemporary mythologies. Her paintings are influenced by master surrealists like Dali and Miro with their precisely cut images that almost feel like they fell onto the canvas.

Inka Essenhigh moves between representational and non-representational traditions with a fluid motion. Line drawings are her focus, and her paintings have a monochromatic feel to them, although they are really built on a variety of gradations of colour tones.

White Rain (2001) is a celebration of sinuous, elegant, energetic drawing. The painting focuses on a mythical horse and Essenhigh seems to delight in the curving, twisting lines of its flowing mane and muscular body. Inka says this is 'girlie' picture referring to a female figure being showered with hairspray whilst struggling to curl her hair.

Inka says her work is very American she speaks about her paintings as having "a lot of Walt Disney about them" suggesting Mattel plastic toys or animations. The stylised, humanoid characters in her paintings are intended to look mass produced, plastic and man-made whilst also being elegant.

"I paint people doing things. People in my paintings are defined by what they do. Shoppers shop. Dancers dance. Birds fly. Victims scream. People are barely individualized beyond their own actions. The way they scream or fly or dance is shown by abstracting their bodies into gestures commonly used in cartooning. Perspectival space is distorted into flat space and sometimes both are used in the same picture. I don't paint about right and wrong: the inhabitants of my paintings do what they do".

Inka says "The general movement in any of my compositions is a physical representation of my own energy. I make decisions about what goes in or what comes out based on what looks good, not on fashionable subject matter." Excerpt *FLASH ART*, OCT 2000

Inka Essenhigh, *Blue Wave*, 2002

"A surreal riff on Japanimation... emblematic paintings for these uneasy times"
NEW YORK TIMES, NOV 2002

A superb draughtswoman... visual complexity of fluid and graceful forms. And what forms! Biomorphic, fantastic, surreal and disturbing!'
TIME OUT

Inka Essenhigh, *Arrows of Fear*, 2002

Sudden Arrival of Morning (2001) depicts a woman leaping out of bed surrounded by a tornado of swirling sheets. She holds aloft a glowing red ball like some contemporary sun-godess, the trousers at her feet evoking a sun – pumping energy – that dawns on the morning of a futuristic world.

In ***Arrows of Fear*** (2002) the red background screams out fear, an advancing minotaur rains down green, yellow and red arrows on terrified and cowering metamorphing forms. There is a playful cartoon-like narrative to this work where good meets evil and superheroes come to the rescue.

On a more serious note ***Manmade Garden*** (2001) was Inka's first painting after September 11 2001 and reflects a darker mood. With its black backdrop it is reflective of some strange scientific experiment. In the distance a lab technician is unwrapping a Frankenstein type form and three anthrax-riddled sheep grow from petra dishes.

New York-based Essenhigh clearly does not cower in the face of change and transformation. Her bright, comical and stylised paintings embrace the future, they express the hopes and optimism of contemporary Western culture, whilst simultaneously voicing anxiety and unease in the face of change and technological development. Inka says her paintings are evolving again and her most recent work promises even more surprises.