

FROM: **AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE**
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MARK RYDEN

Blending themes of pop culture with techniques reminiscent of the old masters, Mark Ryden has created a singular style that blurs the traditional boundaries between high and low art. His work first garnered attention in the 1990s when he ushered in a new genre of painting, “Pop Surrealism,” dragging a host of followers in his wake. Ryden has trumped the initial surrealist strategies by choosing subject matter loaded with cultural connotation.

Ryden’s vocabulary ranges from cryptic to cute, treading a fine line between nostalgic cliché and disturbing archetype. Seduced by his infinitely detailed and meticulously glazed surfaces, the viewer is confronted with the juxtaposition of the childhood innocence and the mysterious recesses of the soul. In Ryden’s world cherubic girls rub elbows with strange and mysterious figures. Ornately carved frames lend the paintings a baroque exuberance that adds gravity to their enigmatic themes.

Ryden received a BFA in 1987 from Arts Center College of Design in Pasadena. His paintings have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide, including a career-spanning retrospective “Cámara de las maravillas” at The Centro de Arte Contemporáneo of Málaga, an earlier retrospective “Wondertooneel” at the Frye Museum of Art in Seattle and Pasadena Museum of California Art, and in the exhibition “The Artist’s Museum” at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

Whipped Cream is Ryden’s first work for American Ballet Theatre.