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FRIDAY, MAY 02, 2008 01:19 PM

### FLORA, FRUIT STAGE ART-WORLD RETURN



Lush, realist oil still-life paintings of juicy, plump fruit and heavy, pretty blossoms might boast a lofty tradition within the canon of art history, but fruit has fallen from its perch as a subject of high art. (These days, impeccably painted images of delicious fecundity are mostly found at amateur art fairs or flea markets.) But London-born and -based artist Mustafa Hulusi is poised to restore fruit's standing as a significant subject for hip and popular young painters. For his second solo exhibition, which opened this week at London's chic Max Wigram (a.k.a. Mr. Phoebe Philo) gallery, Hulusi will present "Exstasy," a show of massive-scaled, perfectly painted close-up images of flowers and fruit cast against majestic blue skies. Hulusi paints from the perspective of a person with his nose pressed inside the center of a fragrant blossom. His images emanate the pure joy of nature at its best. And though fruit might not be "in," blissful beauty is a trend one can easily imagine biting into.

—Ana Finel Honigman

Photo: Courtesy of Francis Ware

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