Amalgamation, 2011
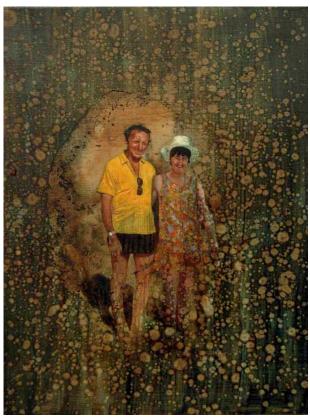oil on canvas, 13.39 x 17.72 inches (34 x 35 cm)

Ross Chisholm
Garden of Forking Paths

September 8 – October 22
Opening Reception:
September 8, 6-8 pm

"The Garden of Forking Paths *is an enormous riddle, or parable, whose theme is time… The Garden of Forking Paths is an incomplete, but not false, image of the universe as Ts'ui Pên conceived it… He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off, or were unaware of one another for centuries, embraces all possibilities of time. We do not exist in the majority of these times; in some you exist, and not I; in others I, and not you; in others, both of us."*

--Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths," 1941

It is with great pleasure that Marc Jancou Contemporary announces *Garden of Forking Paths,* an exhibition of new work by British artist Ross Chisholm. Taking its title from the Jorge Luis Borges story, "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1941), the show will be Chisholm's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Opening on September 8th, from 6-8 PM, it will be on view through October 22nd.

In this body of new paintings, drawings, and altered found photographs, Chisholm takes as his starting point imagery mined from centuries of British visual culture: source materials range from 18th-century society portraiture by Allan Ramsay and Joshua Reynolds to photographs of 20th-century families on vacation collected at flea markets. He painstakingly recreates these original images using the lush techniques of Old Master painting, then disrupts our historical and narrative associations with his subjects through various formal means. In some works, the appealing legibility of traditional portraiture is obscured by splattered paint drips, thick globs of pigment, or unexpected injections of geometric abstraction. In others, recognizable characters from art history are layered with the figures of their fellow countrymen who lived centuries later. By conflating these disparate historical moments and modes of portraiture, the artist draws attention to the shifting conventions of, but sustained urge for, self-representation.

Also evidenced in these works is Chisholm's ongoing use of repetition and motif to explore the temporality of the painted surface. In his new multi-paneled pieces, the artist repeats his source image time and time again, executing each re-creation on the same scale but with variances ranging from subtle changes of palette to dramatic inversions of the figure. These ever-changing manifestations of the same image make material the physical and conceptual processes of painting: we see the picture as it unfolds over time, at various degrees of finish, and witness the potentially infinite number of decisions made by the artist during its creation. By laying bare the subjective nature of this process, Chisholm destabilizes the authority of the image, subverting these iconic pillars of art history and the versions of the past they present. As in Ts'ui Pên's labyrinthine novel at the heart of Borges' story, in which all possible outcomes from an event are allowed to occur simultaneously, these works present a moment in which, "Time forks perpetually toward innumerable futures."

Born in 1977 in the United Kingdom, Chisholm currently lives and works in London. He studied painting at Brighton University before attending Goldsmiths College. Recent solo exhibitions include *Man Directing Water* (2010) at Grieder Contemporary, Berlin and *On the Banks of the Dorsal Stream* (2009) at IBID PROJECTS, London. He has also been featured in group exhibitions at Central St. Martin's, London and the Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, New York, among others. Most recently, Chisholm's work appeared in *Pulsed*, a group show co-curated by the artist at the ASC Gallery, London. A monograph on the artist published by JRP | Ringier is forthcoming in 2012.