HUXLEY-PARLOUR
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New Mythologies
Figurative Abstraction in Contemporary Painting

12 April - 4 May 2019



Iris Schomaker, Untitled, 2017

Huxley-Parlour Gallery, London, is delighted to announce *New Mythologies: Figurative Abstraction in Contemporary Painting*, an exhibition featuring the work of seven contemporary artists including Eileen Cooper RA, John Copeland and Iris Schomaker. The exhibition explores the complexities inherent to image making and representation and examines how each artist extends the narrative potential of their figurative work through abstraction.

Through a tightly curated selection of twenty works made in the past 12 years, the exhibition presents a number of diverse approaches to contemporary figuration and to materiality, whilst highlighting the shared affinities and common approaches to painting held between these seven artists. Each artist uses their own particular form of mark making – from the gestural and intuitive to the precise – to explore storytelling, lived experience and traces of memory.

The work of Stephen Chambers RA invites the viewer into a series of imagined narratives, investigating themes of identity and nationhood in dream-like landscapes inhabited by expressive figures. Hovering between abstract and figurative, Chambers uses planes of intense colour and pattern to construct his strange and complex world.

Continuing the tensions between surface materiality and narrative John Copeland's nude figures are often drawn from images found in 1960s porn and erotic magazines, distorted by the artist with layers of paint. The energy of his raw brushstrokes and use of thick impasto imbues his expressionistic paintings with darker tones; referencing libidinous human drives concealed within everyday experiences.

Emma Fineman's work inhabits the borders of drawing and painting; her subjects are sketchily traced before she begins a process of prolonged gestural painting. Often drawn from memory, Fineman's internal desires are played out in a series of expressive and gestural marks as she explores methods to fracture and reconfigure pictorial space.

Contemporary landscape painting is represented in the exhibition by Goan artist Karishma D'Souza. Bounding abstraction and representation, D'Souza reconstructs imagined and remembered scenes to create surreal and abstracted landscapes, often incorporating numerous scenes on one canvas, influenced by memory, poetry, politics and psychology.

Iris Schomaker's works on paper situate silhouetted and monochromatic figures in restrained, graphic surroundings. Schomaker's visual language explores abstraction through the reduction of both form and colour.

In contrast, Ella Walker's use of various media – tempera, gesso, pastel and ink – is saturating. Using pattern and flat plains of colour, Walker disrupts the structure and narrative of the work. The compositions are tightly framed, shallow spaces that allow interplay between the realms of drawing, paintings and design.

Also driven by the process of drawing, Eileen Cooper RA produces lyrical figurative paintings that encompass themes of fertility, sexuality, motherhood, life and death. She presents highly stylised imagined worlds that allude to magical realism in their use of totemic symbols, flattened space and fractured, dreamlike narratives.

For more information and images please contact
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Emma Fineman, My Hometown Was Burning and All I Could Think of Was That Sun Bleached Wall I Pictured In A Dream About The Domincan Republic, 2017

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