

The Gallery @ Idea Store Whitechapel



Moments Around Us

Laura Bygrave, Kate Groobey, Lucy Homer, Wendy McLean,
Iain Sharpe, Michele Tocca, Avis Underwood.

7 - 30 September 2012



Curated by Kate Groobey and Avis Underwood.

The Gallery @ Idea Store Whitechapel presents 'Moments Around Us', an exhibition exploring painting as both a rigorous and sensual medium.

There is an event at the heart of each of the works, a transformation of the material when colour, line, shape, texture, tone and rhythm intensify in a moment of playfulness or alchemy. Visual and bodily experiences of the world are played out between material and image. Allusions to nature and to surreal forms appear in the residues of paint. Gestures remain open, suggested spaces or figures flutter and pulse in and out of existence, leaving only shards of meaning.

Laura Bygrave's paintings take as their starting point Medieval illuminated manuscripts, Romanesque murals and comics. They are translated, paired with other images and over-painted, creating discordant narratives and accidental relationships. Bygrave absorbs herself in the material, layering marks and colours, creating noise and distortion. Through this process, at the risk of destroying the paintings, we are presented with new and intriguing possibilities.

In **Kate Groobey's** paintings, the human figure is skewed by a relentless process of cutting, rearranging and redrawing. She begins with a quick, simple line drawing in black pen. She goes on to make a watercolour study which is then cut up, rearranged and redrawn or repainted. Groobey repeats this act until she chances upon an image that she feels will translate onto canvas. Playful and open-ended imagery emerges through this exploratory process and a motley crew of characters, landscapes and fragmented narratives develop over a series of paintings.

Lucy Homer's recent paintings have explored the way everyday motifs such as wallpaper prints, light fixings and window panes can combine and fracture, reconfigured by memory. These objects are commonplace, yet also deeply personal, forming part of a psychological space as well as functional space. There is an excitement about the alchemy of the painting process for Homer, and the materials that she uses often acquire an almost sculptural tactility.

Wendy McLean's work asks 'Could the formal questions of structure show an emotional impulse?' Taking as her starting point the wall beyond her studio window, she dissects its moving and relating geometries. Exploring the architecture of the wall through quick, notational, sometimes 'incorrect' drawing, she passes lightly and deftly through different possibilities. Some of these possibilities gain solidarity, some are repeated and proliferated, offering a way to think about how a drawn line could carry a larger, unseen knowledge or significance.

In **Iain Sharpe's** paintings collage forces displacement through discordance. Accuracy of information becomes jumbled in a world where coherence and certainty collapses in on itself. Past projects, paintings and drawings are copied, cut up and re-assembled, giving old ideas a new validity.

What counts most in **Michele Tocca's** work is what he describes as 'a sort of gracious astonishment towards the mysterious nature of objective experience, something to do with consciousness; when painting alters the perception of this objectivity, making it somewhat more aware'. Painting perceptively, from life, he seeks 'that moment of identification between things and paint, an absorption, a total participation'. Tocca's slow and thoughtful paintings form a 'mutual collaboration between painting and things, that suspends and thus witnesses time'.

Avis Underwood's canvases explore the figure through carnivalesque proportions - limbs engorged or shrunken, or frequently reduced to peculiar doodles or gestures - while managing to appear simultaneously archaic and futuristic. Working without a perceived destination, her painting begins with curious shapes, patterns and squiggles layered over each other. Figures dissolve and reappear many times before the final image makes itself known, and the paintings become a record of discovery. In Underwood's paintings, repetition of various shapes, colours and marks can give rise to a feeling of recognition, while still swaying towards the intangible.

About the artists:

Laura Bygrave (b. 1984) graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2010. Recent group exhibitions include 'Backwards Man', CGP, London (2012). She was shortlisted for the Chadwell Award (2010) and also for the John Moores Painting Prize (2010).

Kate Groobey (b. 1979) graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2010. Recent exhibitions include 'Backwards Man', CGP, London (2012). Bloomberg New Contemporaries, ICA, London, selected by Pablo Bronstein, Michael Raedecker, Sarah Jones (2011). 'Newspeak: British Art Now Part II', Saatchi Gallery, London (2010). Groobey was awarded the Stanley Smith Scholarship at the Royal College of Art (2008) and has work in the Saatchi Collection.

Lucy Homer (b.1982) graduated from The Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in 2005. Group exhibitions include 'Atomic Art Bomb', Modern Art Oxford (2004); 'In Violet Night', Wallis Gallery, London (2007). 'Making Mistakes', Wallis Gallery, London, 2008. 'Wallis Dies and Goes to Paradise', Paradise Row, London (2009).

Wendy McLean (b.1985) graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2011. Recent group exhibitions include 'Nothing Fixed', curated by Shaun McDowell (including Raoul de Keyser, Howard Hodgkin and Varda Caivano), Marcelle Joseph Projects (2011). McLean was awarded the Neville Burston Award at the Royal College of Art (2011) and the Gilchrist-Fisher Memorial Prize, Rebecca Hossack Gallery (2010). She has work in the Zabłudowicz Collection and in the David Roberts Collection.

Iain Sharpe (b. 1974) graduated from the Slade School of Fine Art in 1998. Solo exhibitions include Anima Galleri, Reykjavik (2006). Group exhibitions include 'The Occupier', Pump House Gallery, London (2001); 'Excursions', V.T.O Gallery, London (2001).

Michele Tocca (b. 1983) graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2011. Group exhibitions include Z-time, Blythe Gallery, London, travelling to Era Foundation, Moscow (2010); 'Expanded Painting', Prague Biennale 4 (2009); 'Ici', Otto Zoo, Milan (2008). Tocca was shortlisted for the Valerie Beston Award at the Royal College of Art (2011).

Avis Underwood (b. 1969) graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2010. Recent group exhibitions include Studio Voltaire Members Exhibition, selected by Jenni Lomax and Mike Nelson (2012); Jerwood Drawing Prize, selected by Iwona Blazwick, Tim Marlow and Rachel Whiteread (2010); Saatchi's 'New Sensations', selected by Mat Collishaw, Rachel Whiteread, Darren Flook, Alex Farquharson, Soraya Rodriguez (2010). Underwood won the Outset Contemporary Art Fund studio prize while in the final year at Royal College of Art.