

Flat
Volume

FLAT VOLUME

EXHIBITION AT A.P.T GALLERY
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1 The Painter's Object edited by Myfanwy Evans London Gerald Howe LTD 1937

2 "I have called these works made since 2001 'coloured drawings'". Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) page 34.

3 All websites cited in the footnotes throughout this entire publication were accessed between Sept 2024 – May 2025

FLAT VOLUME

CURATED BY SARAH LONGWORTH-WEST
ESSAY BY NICHOLAS HATFULL

LARRY ACHIAMPONG

KEITH ASHCROFT

MOHAMMED QASIM ASHFAQ

CRAIG BARBER

PHYLLIDA BARLOW

DESMOND BRETT

LESLEY BUNCH

MATTHEW BURROWS MBE

JENNIFER CAROLINE CAMPBELL

PETER CHALMERS

LOUISA CHAMBERS

BEN COVE

STEVIE DIX

MICHELE FLETCHER

REBECCA FOSTER-CLARKE

NEIL GALL

LYNDSEY GILMOUR

KIRSTY HARRIS

IAN HARTSHORNE

NICHOLAS HATFULL

CELIA HEMPTON

JAMES IRWIN

BEN JAMIE

YUMI KATAYAMA

YUN KYUNG JEONG

CHLOE LE TISSIER

SARAH LONGWORTH-WEST

SCOTT MCCRACKEN

DAMIEN MEADE

FAY NICOLSON

CHARLEY PETERS

SARAH POOTS

LORNA ROBERTSON

CARL ROWE

SARAH RYDER

ALAENA TURNER

BEN WESTOBY

MĂDĂLINA ZAHARIA

FOREWARD

*...UNAMBIGUOUS AFFECTION FOR THE PHENOMENAL TACTILITY
AND IDIOSYNCRASY OF THE OBJECT WORLD – THE FEEL AND
FLAVOUR OF THINGS.¹*

A large group exhibition of 41 works from 38 artists, aimed at contextualising 'Flat Volume' within contemporary painting. The concept of 'Flat Volume' was influenced by Paul Nash's 'Equivalents for the Megaliths' 1935 and Phyllida Barlow's wealth of painted 'coloured drawings'.²

In a time when we are increasingly consumed by screens, the remit of the show is to highlight and absorb the physical forms and objects we are surrounded by and therefore also reinforce our relationships to our physical haptic environments; how we deal with the importance of 'object-ness' and question the values of form through painting.

This selection of national and international artists all interrelate by their enduring preoccupation with how volume is conjured, achieved and explored through varieties of strategies, instincts and processes. These include :

- ONE Placement of Parts:** absolute idiosyncratic specificity of placement.
- TWO Object(ness)/Form:** desire for 'solid' forms – within the picture plane – alongside a pull to unusual structures.
- THREE Relief – concave/convex:** the melding boundaries of painting and sculpture.
- FOUR Illusion of form or relief.**

These works bring to the forefront object/non-objects and, in doing so, enhance our attention upon the visual fundamentals but through slow(ed) viewing – within the dynamic 'lived' and arresting moments of the painting – which allows us to view and interrogate material culture and value systems; our relationship to them and ideally more consciously acknowledge them, however beguiling.

Sarah Longworth-West

¹ The Landscape Vision of Paul Nash. Roger Cardinal. Reaktion books.1989. Page 43

² Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) page 34.

ENFOLDED OUT THERE

BY NICHOLAS HATFULL

I remember a house where we lived... This house stood in the high part of the city. From my window I could see in the distance an artillery barracks; when the Greek national fête was celebrated a battery came out of the courtyard at a rapid gallop and went towards a hill which stood some distance away. When they reached it the men got down from their wagons and horses, arranged the cannon in a row and then fired salvoes. White globes, like clouds which had fallen down on to the earth, rolled around a little, then broke up and faded away against the side of the hill. The explosion was heard shortly afterwards and made the window-panes shake slightly. The fact of seeing the flash first and then hearing the sound afterwards made a great impression on me. Later I knew the reasons for it, but even today I am still slightly impressed when I watch a gun being fired a long way off, seeing the flash first and hearing the report later.

Giorgio de Chirico¹

Depth thus understood is...a global locality in which everything is in the same place at the same time, a locality from which height, width and depth are abstracted, a voluminosity we express in a word when we say that a thing is there.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty²

Distance generates enchantment and mystery.³ Few reading this will be impervious to that. Both Giorgio de Chirico, in an anecdote from his memoirs, and Joan Jonas, in an early performance, have lingered on the effect of distance on perception, and its attendant mysteries. In each case they foreground sonic delay as a means to accent distance. Joan Jonas 'Beach Piece' (1970), situated in the exposed environs of mud flats and dunes, isolated performers

and audience from each other with 'a quarter of a mile of intervening light and air'. In the above passage from de Chirico's memoirs, the metaphysical painter recalls the entrancing effect on his childhood self of seeing 'white globes' of cannon smoke materialising on a distant hill, and his wonder at the apparent cleaving apart of flash and sound. This lag between seeing and hearing perhaps accentuated de Chirico's awareness of the respective coordinates, distinct but related, of his ears and the distant cannon fire – at once the gulf between them but also his sense of embeddedness in the scene. It is tempting to speculate, given the artist's treasuring of this vignette, that it informed his conception of shallow, yet vast and intraversable pictorial space.

Any painting that implicates the picture plane – that charged threshold that both precipitates depth and seals us off from it with an invisible pane – deals in distance. The horizon becomes tantalising because in contrast to our experience of the real, where 'everything I see is, on principle, within my reach'⁴ plainly in painting it is unattainable and impenetrable, never to disclose anything further except, perhaps, a continual slow release of mystery. We can look all we like, but go no further.⁵ Philip Guston and Wayne Thiebaud have spoken memorably at various times with respectful awe of the beauty of the picture plane, and its operation as a kind of law of the land, a fundamental and constant interaction. 'Imaginary', 'totally an imaginary', 'an illusive imaginary' plane, but – here's an attractive paradox – absolutely palpable. To be heeded and loved because it is the ineluctable basis of pictorial space.

Guston, having spoken of the dance with the picture plane as a link between Piero della Francesca and modern painting, exclaims;

-
- 1 Giorgio de Chirico, *The Memoirs of Giorgio de Chirico*, translated by Margaret Crosland Peter Owen, London (Translated by Margaret Crosland). Peter Owen London 1971, p.14
 - 2 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind*, *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader : philosophy and painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, Evanston, Ill. : Northwestern University Press 1993, p140
 - 3 J.G. Ballard on Helmut Newton, *J.G. Ballard Selected Nonfiction 1962-2007*, The MIT Press, 2023
 - 4 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind*, *The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader : philosophy and painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson, Evanston, Ill. : Northwestern University Press 1993, p124
 - 5 One might think of the pathos and thwarted yearning of Mike Kelley's *Kandors* – works reflecting on a strand of Superman lore in which he saves his home city from a distant planet, but finds it is impossible to retrieve it from a drastically shrunken state, and that it must be preserved under a glass bell jar.

"...My only interest in painting is really, as I go on and on, on this metaphysical plane where the condition exists of no finish, no end, but infinite continuity".⁶

The impassable threshold permits the endlessness.

The ancient beech trees capping the chalk hills known as the Wittenham Clumps were a savoured and revisited subject for Paul Nash. In an early watercolour from 1911-13 these stand for the beauty of trees spied in the distance, their layers of leaf canopy on the cusp of being effaced by atmospheric perspective into a milky silhouette, their volume retreating from view. In *Landscape of the 'Vernal Equinox'* (1943), they have something of the deadpan eeriness of matte scenic painting, and that Nashian swept brushwork, but an enchanted, self-effacing quality too – like a fleeting and subtly layered effect of light and cloud at dusk. Reading how essential field glasses were to Nash's contemplation of the Clumps,⁷ one wonders if the subtle instability in the pictorial space records his switching between lens, naked eye and painting, and the resulting state shifts of his motif. After all, binoculars isolate a subject and magnify detail, affording intimate focus – but of a remote kind, in which a sense of distance is never eliminated. Everything in this softened, undulating topography seems to be slipping away discreetly, like evening light. In pictorial terms, the beeches must occupy the middle ground, but somehow appear to be in retreat, turning to merge, inexorably, with the horizon.

There is a sense of our gaze being returned by the trees. And aura, because in a Benjaminian sense, we become aware of the 'unique phenomenon of distance'⁸ Nash would have perceived.

In the parametric stretch between the picture plane and pictured horizon, we glean a vestigial sense of Nash's rooted, embedded perspective, his awareness of the voluminous experience and enigma of 'there' he wanted to render in painted space. It is telling that Benjamin's classic statement on the idea of close distance reached for

an idyllic sounding landscape (a summer afternoon, distant mountains in view, branches casting shadows in the putative phenomenological vignette) to explain what stood to be lost, as aura decayed. 'Namely, the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' ' precipitated the loss of aura, in Benjamin's terms diminishing our relationship with original works of art, but of course a lot more could be said on how this corresponds to our ruptured connection with the natural world, which in turn invokes our imperiled future in these surroundings.

"It cannot be merely a question of an unmysterious interval (as seen from a plane)".⁹ The apparently omniscient views afforded by drone footage, an endemic cliché of contemporary filmmaking, often seem intended to convey a dread inevitable pattern, analagous to emergent plot intrigue.

The perspective presented is alien to our direct perception and (unaugmented quotidian) lived experience. 'Lived perspective' is dynamic – to open up an object for contemplation reconstitutes the 'spontaneous arrangement' of the parts of a scene, perhaps closing off surroundings. To inspect Paul Nash's *Still Life* photographs and connect an amenable tennis ball, flint or diminutive cylinder with the looming, oneirically monumental forms in the corresponding paintings is to experience a sense of these objects' metaphysical scalability, of disorienting yet precise telescoping. 'The objects we see close at hand appear smaller, those far away seem larger than they do in a photograph' – Merleau-Ponty sharply distinguishes 'lived perspective' from geometric or photographic renderings. In *Tight Connection to My Heart* (Has Anyone Seen My Love), Bob Dylan sings of a related phenomenological paradox –

*"What looks large from a distance
Close up ain't never that big"*

The present exhibition's title conjures a simultaneous allusion to modelled three-dimensional form, and an acknowledgement of a support's flatness, the 'mere'ness¹⁰ of paint. A sustaining paradox of painting

6 Philip Guston *On Piero della Francesca* (a talk given at the New York Studio School, August 1971) Philip Guston: *A Life Spent Painting*, Robert Storr, Lawrence King p.270

7 David Fraser Jenkins, *Paul Nash The Elements*, Dulwich Picture Gallery 2010 p. 162

8 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Available at: <https://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/benjamin.pdf> (Accessed: 06/06/2025)

9 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Eye and Mind*, ibid p.140

10 T.J. Clark, *The Sight of Death*, Yale University Press, 2008 p.180

hoves into view. We might think of de Chirico's notional, marooned indications of shading. And Guston's complaint of a misperception then gaining currency that picture plane referred to surface (perhaps a result of Greenbergian colour field painting hugging the plane so closely, any depth approaching a state of merging the surface). But a consideration of pictorial space and its relationship to distance emerges as a corollary of this premise, and as core to the painting remits of several exhibited artists. Yumi Katayama's looming clouds of pastel tint, wispy yet voluminous, seem to be floating towards us – their sense of forward travel perhaps an effect of the tiled path receding beneath them into a shrouded, mountainous horizon. This calls to mind the experience described by de Chirico – 'White globes, like clouds which had fallen down on to the earth, rolled around a little, then broke up and faded away against the side of the hill.' In Scott McCracken's densely atmospheric quasi-landscape (the artist remarked during a studio visit that recent paintings pertain not to real landscape, but the quiddities of painted landscape space), the viewer feels almost endowed with the ability to bring things forward from the sky or horizon by dint of their curiosity, pulling iron sunflowers forwards for inspection ('anything I see is within reach'). Both these paintings transmit the sense of a horizon pressing towards us, and a thick, ruminative dusk. Elsewhere we find reflections on close distance in Celia Hempton's vulgar self-portrait (in this case she bridges the distance between eye and mind and groin by crouching over a mirror, though in other works the artist has used webchat to collapse distance, reminding us of the etymology of television, rendering faraway 'sitters' in the intimate flickering of her close-toned value patterns. Kirsty Harris' picturing of a nuclear test cloud, in which depending on the era of the source image, the observation point's distance from the 'there' where voluminosity mushroomed may have been critically less safe than disclosed.

In Sarah Longworth-West's painting 'Swell', the form making the most immediate claim on our attention is an irregularly shaped

swathe of blue tarpaulin, thoroughly articulated with extensive folds and intricate creases. The painting to some degree restages¹¹ the artist's apprehending of this tarp from their home across the street, attentive to both the billowing overallness, its either cut or torn lower flaps, and the phenomena of its surface variegation – moments of sheen and drapery-like convolution. As Merleau-Ponty tells us, to see is to 'have at a distance', and Longworth-West removes all worldly context – save for lengths of scaffold that indicate where the ground might have been – floating the tarp above an indeterminate, shifting space (and recontextualised with forms from elsewhere). It has a topographical aspect, like a modelled landscape diorama suspended upright, and thus a strangely horizonless terrain¹², but is also something like a baleful scrap of wrapping paper, prone, torn and liable to be blown away. Palpably stirring in an evoked breeze, we have the feeling that this object is 'about to change...something (is) imminent in this tension, as the storm is imminent in the clouds'.¹³

Caught between pliability and brittleness (perhaps a side effect of the cool acuity of Longworth-West's attention in paint), the crisp intricacy of the tarp also suggests 'the touch and feel of a leaf', sought by Paul Nash – the lodestar of this exhibition – as a defining quality in his art.¹⁴ 'Out there', it surely made itself known to Longworth-West as an opportunity to access the two sorts of loneliness that de Chirico identified as fundamental to 'every serious work of art'; the 'plastic loneliness' or 'beatitude of contemplation' achieved via construction and combination of form and the 'metaphysical loneliness for which no logical training exists'. The 'swell' of the painting's title surely alludes to a surge in voluminosity as the tarp is animated by a breeze, but perhaps an incipient feeling making itself known, too. For a painter, the stimmung of an observed phenomena and its capacity to move may be tangled with the realisation this thing might be paintable.

More plastically supple and polymorphic is the thickly folded form drawn in acrylic

11 Perhaps in a 'rite of worship', as Auden would characterise the impulse to create.

12 Craig Barber's painting combines a gaze-returning horizon of trees, in Fairfield Porterish contre-jour, with a geometric framework being assembled from rods – which could be the skeletal analogue to the draped form of Longworth-West's tarpaulin.

13 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 2014 edition, Routledge, p.41

14 Paul Nash 1930s letter to *The Times*, cited in Derek Hyatt, 'Paul Nash and the Megaliths', *Modern Painters Winter* 1994 p.66

paint by Phyllida Barlow in 'untitled: hollow'. It is also perhaps further removed from the world we directly inhabit. The body of works on paper made with paint stemmed from Barlow's observation of everyday sculptural situations happened upon in the urban milieu of her home and studio – importantly her dissatisfaction with the extraneous environmental context present in the photographs she took. "I wanted...isolated objects...sculptures in the making...I did not want...people, hedges, trees and pathways". One might recall Heidegger's evoking of the 'free field' in which the thing may 'display its thingness quite directly'. As Sophie Raikes has noted, the space surrounding the remembered object(s), though indeterminate, appears 'equally vivid and dense', sometimes countering the shape of the object and at others 'spreading over the form like quicksand'. Acrylic paint on the page became a zone for Barlow to express imagined sculptural properties so engaged in enigmatic paradox they elude realisation in three dimensions; 'to make edges without structure and physical materiality...To push (edges) to the edge of existence and liberate the edge of its edginess'.¹⁵

'untitled: hollow' images an agglomeration of robustly colourful planes, apparently in two phases or states of being. Were this a plan for a sculpture, we might surmise a multifaceted sculptural form, supplemented by a floor painting that begins creeping up a wall. But within the space of Barlow's page, in 'her definitively flexible material'¹⁶ of acrylic paint, this seems literal-minded. Is the sculptural form unwinding a polychrome, origami-ish shadow, which upon meeting the right angle at the far edge of the pictorial space begins to fold back on itself? It seems just as possible that the 'sculpture in the making' began its progress there, darting across the floor as shards of flat colour before a shapeshifting lurch into something modeled and haptic. The 'shadow' reading seems contradicted by the thickness and lapidary quality of the planes – the 'floor' and 'wall' seem too palpably there, commensurate with the folded form to take a back seat – the planes

are all too contiguous to assign any a lower pecking order.

A varietal of compulsive fold – manual, generative, spatial – inheres in the gestures of Michele Fletcher's painting. Wristy, recursive, ouroboric, the swoops and plunges of her honeyed paint conjure glimpses of an elusive, inner landscape space, the vanishing fluidity of phosphenes as much as a faintly primordial vegetation. I am reminded of Benjamin Westoby's phrase from this publication – 'malleable terrain'¹⁷ and the effect explained by Merleau-Ponty of the synergy between moments of distortion and prevailing composition in Cézanne – the 'impression of an emerging order, an object in the act of appearing, organising itself before our eyes'.¹⁸ This key operation teases and stimulates as it echoes our participation 'in natural vision' in an active, reconstituting process towards an apprehended gestalt.

Sarah Ryder's shaped painted reliefs come close to liberating the edge of its edginess, and are actually, resolutely flexible (being painted on unsupported foil) – their form changing when packed and unfurled on the occasion of exhibitions. With rootless passages of brushwork that skirt or dance across the surface, they are both a terrain unfurled and, in relation to the works by Barlow and Longworth-West, access closer to painted undulations and recesses. Ryder's surface and fields of gradients are the setting for bringing forth folds of trapped colour, making it 'adhere to – belong to – a world we can be part of'.¹⁹

Contemplating the processes and habits of mind present in these works by Ryder, Barlow and Longworth-West, I am reminded of T.J. Clark's reflexive question – 'What, when Cézanne takes the trouble to fold a compliant material into shapes and gradients he thinks a painting can thrive on, does he do to the folds?' To some degree, a version of this inquiry will have been live, hovering in the air as the nuanced crumpling of Ryder, Barlow and Longworth-West respectively unfolded. It is in folds that conditions transpire to kindle the life of a particular kind of drawing

15 Sophie Raikes, *Bad copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow*, Leeds: Henry Moore Foundation, 2012. p 27

16 *ibid*

17 Though given to a harder-edged and geometric vocabulary the 'malleable terrain' of Westoby's relief and Desmond Brett's fibreglass planes share something of an 'impression of an emergent order' with Fletcher's painting.

18 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Cézanne's Doubt*, The Merleau-Ponty aesthetics reader : philosophy and painting, ed. Galen A. Johnson, Evanston, Ill. : Northwestern University Press 1993, p.64

19 T.J. Clark, *If These Apples Should Fall: Cézanne and the Present*, Thames and Hudson, 2022, p.82

and painting – a perspective turned in on itself, yet sharply attuned to phenomena, and ruminative, yet alert to plasticity and extemporaneous play.

T.J. Clark relates folds to anthropomorphic landscape, and the heavens. Cézanne's tablecloths, drapes and coats underscore that folds are 'the life blood' of painting. 'The mountain (Montagne Sainte-Victoire seen from Château Noir) looks crystalline... but having many of the characteristics – the crumpled look, the piecemeal unevenness – of an object put together by hand'. 'A languid body...under a plumped-up patterned coverlet.'²⁰ Now that's a simultaneity of concealing and revealing to reckon with. We'll come back to the metaphysics of patterned bedspreads shortly.

The folded form has forever been a prompt for painted remarks on the fabric of our world, the texture of the real – and certainly for running through 'the work of disclosure, of exposition of solids and shading'.²¹ But its everyday inscrutability suggests a metaphoric dimension, some fundamental aspect of our interiority and lived experience. Perhaps the analogue of folded form is involved reflection – something compacted and scrunched that might be revisited, attentive care given to restoring it to some semblance of flatness so that it might be surveyed again from a new vantage point. Merleau-Ponty is at pains, in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, to reveal the landscape-oriented bearings of consciousness, wherein previous experience is an accessible horizon:

'To remember... is to plunge into the horizon of the past and gradually to unfold tightly packed perspectives until the experiences that it summarises are as if lived anew in their own temporal place'.

There is a sequence in 'An Autumn Afternoon', the last film by the director – for whom Joan Jonas named her dog – Ozu Yasujirō, involving a blanket, and our advance through a sequence of establishing shots into an apartment block. Ozu built on the convention of the establishing shot, developing sequences of landscapes empty of people. These serial intervals, ever more refined, provided a compartmentalised form for compositional riffing and ludic spatial

reveries – Ozu scholar David Bordwell calls this 'parametric play'. As Clark noted of Cézanne's folds, they entrance because they are 'liable to take on a life of their own. Or a non-life.'²² Indeed, for like the trees atop the Wittenham Clumps, the features of the urban environment and domestic interiors Ozu lingers on seem to return our gaze in the manner discussed by Merleau-Ponty in *Eye and Mind*. The gaze they return is one of 'mute "thereness"'.²³ An aspect of perceptual experience that touches on the ineffable.

As we approach the *Autumn Afternoon's* low-rise block from one angle, having first glimpsed it distantly from the near side of a railway crossing, we perhaps notice there is some visual idiosyncrasy in its facade, but cannot immediately identify it. A glorious subsequent shot presents a view of the apartment balconies, revealing them festooned with exquisitely arranged washing. We soon find ourselves inside one of the apartments, looking out onto a balcony (we are effectively viewing the horizon of the first shot from just behind, and beyond its threshold of visibility). Somebody is beating the dust out of a colourful blanket. Elements are shuffled, views are switched and reversed. In a slightly earlier film, 'Ohayo', we can see one of the quilts hung in the 'An Autumn Afternoon' apartment laundry sequence making a previous appearance as it is brought inside having been aired. Slung folded over a character's arm, as she walks back inside, clutching also a rug beater, it is conspicuously paraded before us from a number of angles (and therefore folded aspects), passing through several spaces before being gently set aside. Ochre, green and cream in serried parallelograms; this a series of patterned remarks, a discreet meditation on permutational variants of stable but shifting form, the relationship between interior and exterior, flat pattern and fluctuating volume, and things having their time in the sun before being packed away.

20 T.J. Clark, *If These Apples Should Fall: Cézanne and the Present*, Thames and Hudson, 2022, p111-112

21 T.J. Clark, *If These Apples Should Fall: Cézanne and the Present*, Thames and Hudson, 2022, p.83

22 *ibid*

23 Darrell W.Davis, 'Ozu, the Ineffable', in *Reorienting Ozu*, ed. Jinhee Choi, Oxford University Press 2018 p.38



Plate 1

Mădălina Zaharia 'Negative Space as Things' 2017 Adhesive wall fabric, mild steel. 250 x 399 cm.



Plate 2

Charley Peters 'Soft Crash, Hard Feelings' 2025 Oil on canvas. 50 x 40 cm.



Plate 3

Yumi Katayama 'Visitor' 2023 Oil on canvas. 120 x 100 cm.



Plate 4

Sarah Poots 'Many Parts' 2024 Oil on canvas. 92 x 82 cm.

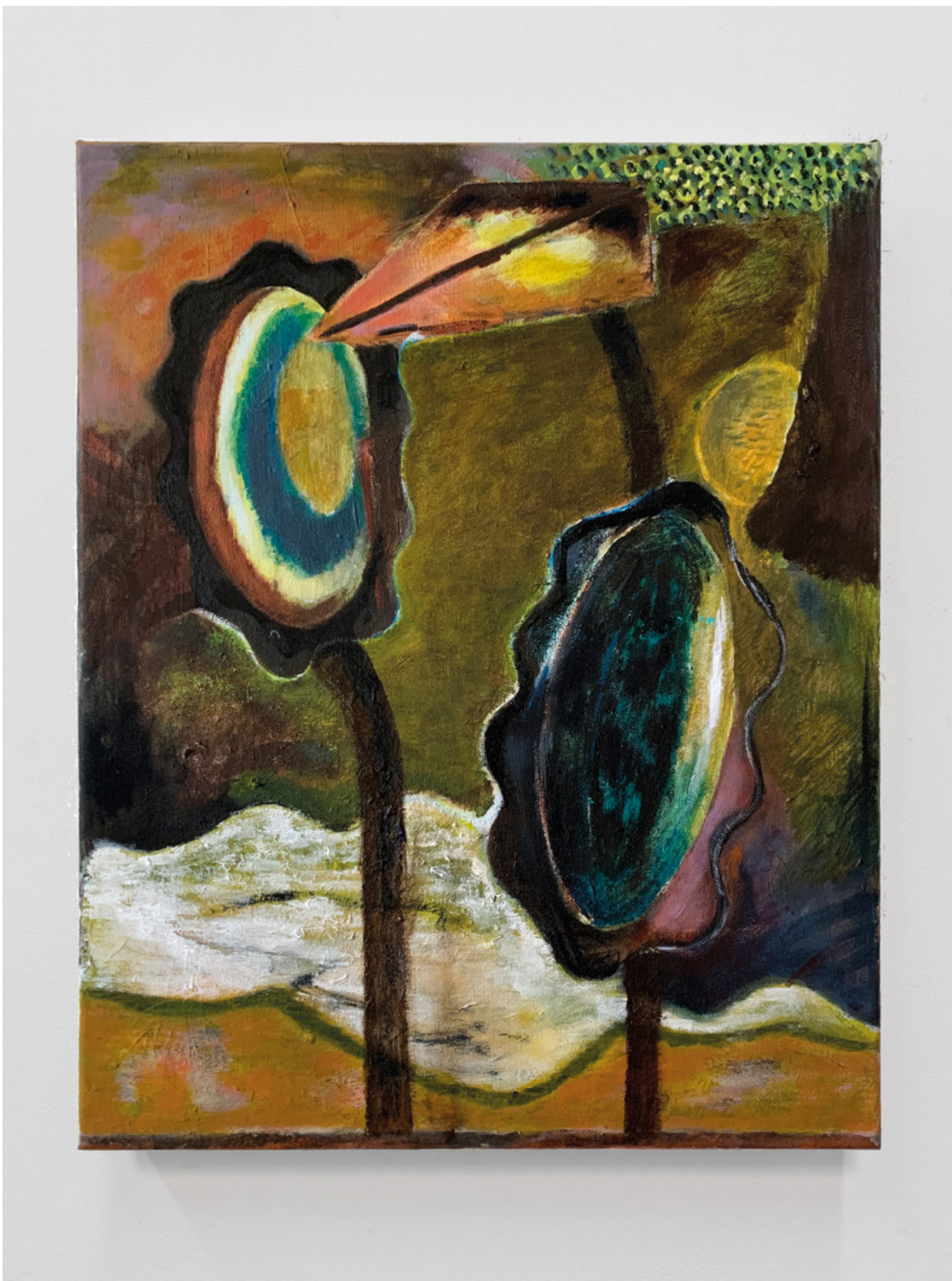


Plate 5

Scott McCracken 'Clockmove' 2021-23 Acrylic and flashe on canvas. 50 x 40 cm.



Plate 6

Louisa Chambers 'Crab' 2020 Acrylic and oil paint on linen. 30 x 25 cm.

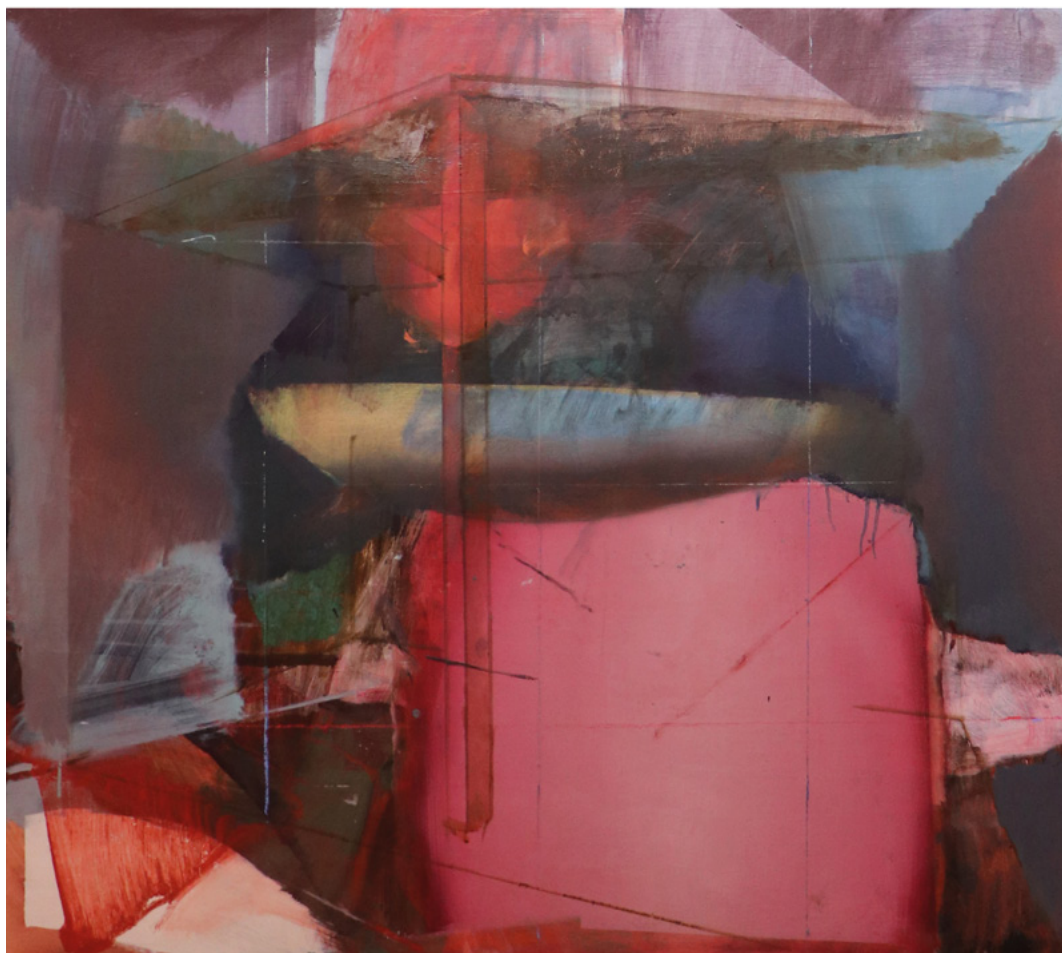


Plate 7

Keith Ashcroft 'Placeholder' 2024 Oil on linen. 80 x 90 cm.



Plate 8

Nicholas Hatfull 'Afters Forking I (pine drift)' 2024 Oil, acrylic and acrylic gouache on linen.
210 x 150 cm.



Plate 9

Sarah Longworth-West 'Swell' 2022 Oil paint and oil pastel on pigmented gesso panel with remnant.
118 x 84 x 3.8 cm



Plate 10

Carl Rowe 'Dumbbell and Gemstone' 2024 Acrylic on canvas. 100 x 76 cm.



Plate 11

Ben Cove 'Homunculus' 2015 Acrylic on panel. 50 x 62.5 cm.



Plate 12

Chloe Le Tissier 'Their shoes' 2022 Acrylic on canvas. 40.5 x 25 cm.



Plate 13

Neil Gall 'Candidate' 2022 Oil on canvas. 61 x 51 cm.

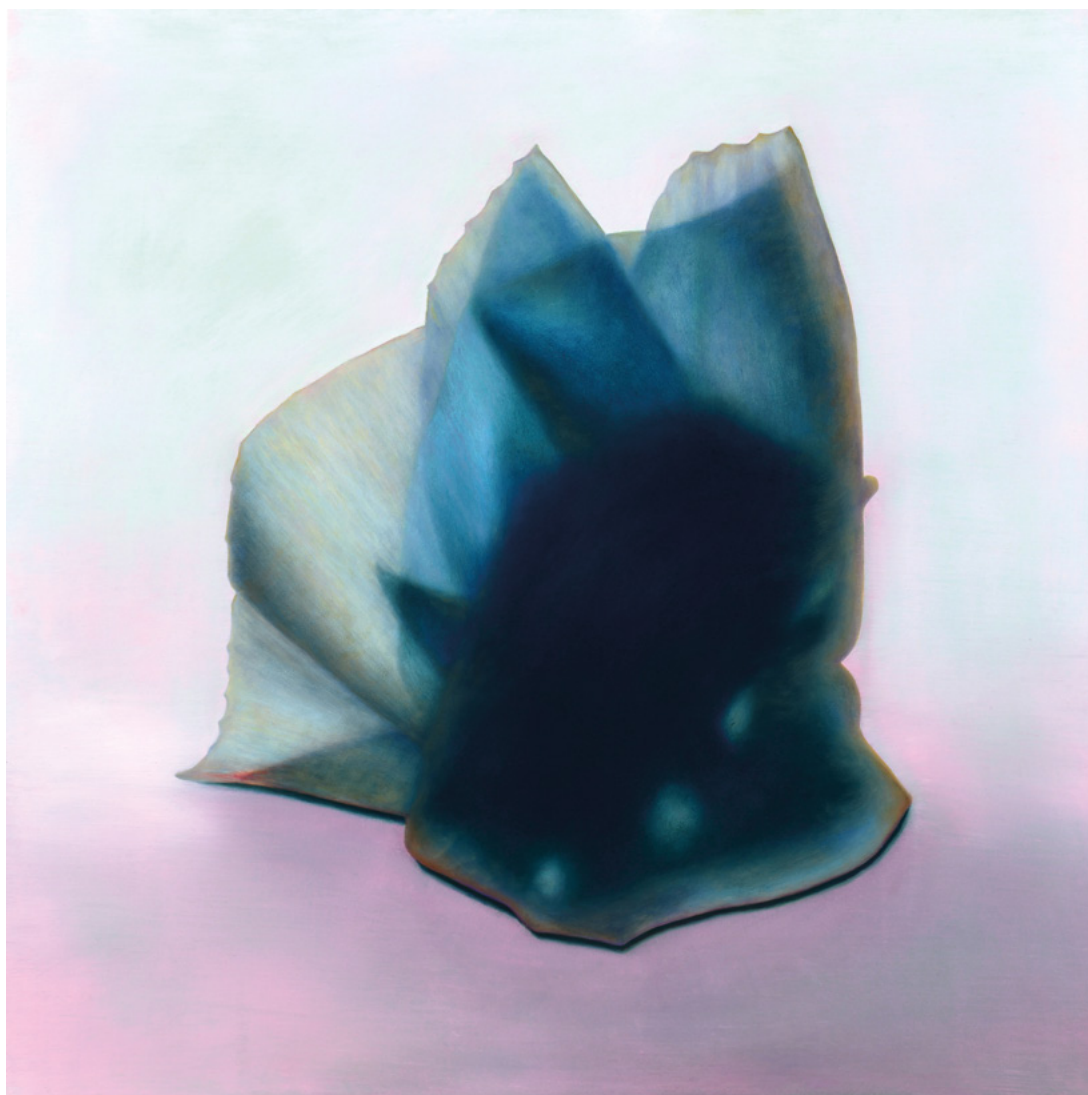


Plate 14

Lesley Bunch 'Shadow Sculpture 6' 2020 Oil on wooden panel. 40 x 40 cm.



Plate 15

Phyllida Barlow 'untitled: hollow' 2022 Acrylic on paper. 57 x 76 cm.

© Phyllida Barlow Estate. Courtesy the Phyllida Barlow Estate and Hauser & Wirth.
Photo: Alex Delfanne



Plate 16

Kirsty Harris 'Test no. 6' 2016 Oil on Linen. 167 x 126 cm / 66" x 55".



Plate 17

Damien Meade 'Untitled' 2025 Oil on Canvas. 45 x 35 cm.



Plate 18

Rebecca Foster-Clarke 'Eye Candy' 2024 Oil paint on canvas. 18.5 x 29 cm.



Plate 19

Stevie Dix 'CHAOS' 2024 Oil and wax on Belgian linen, hardwood. 84 x 102 cm.



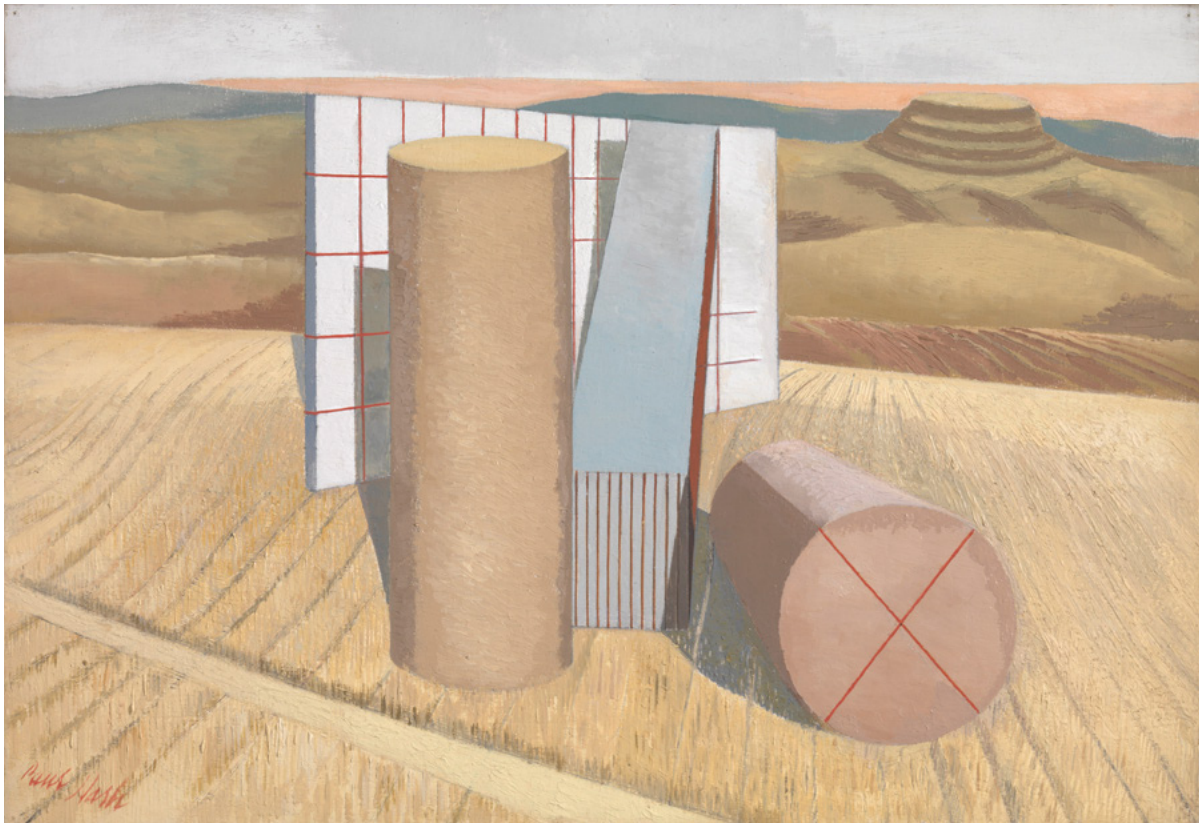
Plate 20

Sarah Longworth-West 'c_u' 2024 Oil paint and oil pastel on pigmented gesso panel. 86 x 61 cm.



Plate 21

Celia Hempton 'Self Portrait, 15th October 2019' 2019 Oil on gesso panel. 35 x 30 cm.



Equivalents for the Megaliths, 1935, Paul Nash. Oil on canvas, support: 457 x 660mm. Tate, purchased 1970. Photo: Tate.

FLAT VOLUME. CURATOR'S TEXT

BY SARAH LONGWORTH-WEST

GENESIS OF AN IDEA – PAINTER'S STUDIO PROCESSES & REFLECTIONS

As an artist-curator the concept, selection of works and how these knit together are inevitably going to span out from studio practice, personal obsessions and interests. As evolving artists we are always grappling with the bones of our practices to flesh them out in a comprehensible manner for others. We tend to know our works and the self-imposed confines of how, why and what we work on and it isn't until additional, often external 'limitations', push against these that allow us to enhance our focus on an 'element' of practice we possibly took for granted.

In 2022 I was invited by two early career researchers at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen: Lyndsey Gilmour and Peter Chalmers – to participate in their exchange project titled 'Painted Conversations'.

Myself and partnered Scottish artist – Marcus Murison, decided that, as we did not yet know anything about each other's practice, we would simply exchange a work and respond only via this one selected painting. After our first 'reaction' paintings were made, we then had a long verbal conversation. Due to the nature of Marcus' work with a focus on surface tension, as opposed to any illusionary depth, the next exchange was a particularly artistically and interesting personal 'challenge', which kept rearing its head in the studio during the making and reflection processes.

I kept being drawn back to wanting to impart a form into the work but also noticed this clear pull and stopped myself as I truly wanted to 'react' to Marcus's painting alone. Therefore, I did embrace the, what I'd describe as – flatness on flatness – almost as layers of a computer screen or

carefully placed collaged papers which do emphasise a particular interest in my work. Yet importantly – I was fully realising – not the whole of my core interests. This is not a rejection of surface but in addition to it. Hence, it became evident that I really needed 'volume' within my work and imagery. Not simply to delineate a particular place or space or thing but to gravitate the viewer towards some 'thing' of perhaps fleeting permanence, which they could hope to grab onto.

Paul Nash's work is the perfect example of how I started to frame this notion of volume in my work. Nash's 'importance is so undimmed'¹ especially to painters.

Of course we can trace back through an extensive art historical relationship with objects in painting and this is key to understanding the prevailing desire to paint something tangible, haptic and possibly recognisable. But it is quite something else to be interested by these concerns today, when we have a huge scope of media, approaches and tools to choose from. The artists in 'Flat Volume' though are of course not translating what they see and that which exists – they are each making their own nuanced investigations into something relating to this historical lineage, yet making afresh and truly reflective of our contemporary environment.

The desire to conjure depth – from shallow to gargantuan – through the use of form is as old as painting itself.²

STARTING THE CURATORIAL-NON-CURATORIAL PROCESS

As this experience of my studio practice formed into an idea for a group exhibition, clusters of artists, who I was able to easily recall, due to a familiarity with their work over many years, started to dance and dart around in my mind's eye; in terms of working well with one another visually and conceptually under the umbrella of 'Flat Volume'. These artists included mentors and peers, both from real experience and also those only viewed from a great distance, possibly due to a visual overlap in interest, or just because I liked their works. To test these ideas and combinations in October 2023, I made a mock up with a selected example work from each of the artists, all

printed in low-fi miniature, like a card game. This helped to clarify if I was biased or if I had only imagined they would all work together; essentially to test my theories out. I was also feeling bogged down with screen-based work for funding applications, etc.. I really wanted to physically play with these miniature representations of the works. I needed this haptic experience to see clearer and make a game or at least some playfulness of forming the images into clustered relationships. With a number of iterations and edits, the exhibition concept was developed and the curatorial process had begun.

This is not to say that other artists would not 'fit' or do not fall under the 'Flat Volume' umbrella. However, there had to be decisions made and accessibility to the works considered - i.e. this was not an exhaustive list but a way of considering the ideas surrounding 'Flat Volume' and one to possibly carry forward when viewing and digesting contemporary paintings.

WITTENHAM CLUMPS, OXFORDSHIRE – LIFE/INANIMATE OBJECT AS FORM

AKA 'The Clumps' to locals. My parents decided to move to Oxfordshire from London in 1982 when I was one year old. It is close to Didcot Parkway, a commuter line, which my dad took for 30 years. I remember embracing him as a small girl with the heavy smell of smoke that had penetrated his clothes when the train was too full and he had to stand in the smoking carriage. I also remember driving past the Didcot's 'chimney pots' – water cooling towers for the coal fired power station – which, it was rumoured, were positioned in the landscape with the help of Henry Moore. The six coal fired pots are no longer, only a few tall slim gas chimneys still stand. We could see them from my primary school playground, a familiar omnipresent sculptural arrangement; also featured in *The Simpsons*®! And perhaps you have a version of this too.... a seawall, a castle, a block of flats, a harbour, afill this space....., or possibly some huge hills – or what I thought were just hills at the time – the second but crucial example of mine.

Wittenham Clumps are a pair of earthwork wooded chalk hills: Round Hill and Castle Hill including an Iron Age fort close to the

1 Ian A.C. Dejardin, Director of Simon Lee 2010. Forward 'Paul Nash The Elements' Scala, Dulwich Picture Gallery
2 <https://www.bradshawfoundation.com/lascaux/> – Cave Paintings of South Western France



Wittenham Clumps by Hedley Thorne.³

River Thames in Oxfordshire, an important centre in Southern England in Roman times. Their history suggests they contained burial grounds and treasure stores. They have 'clumps' of ancient beech trees densely amassed which crown both hills, enhancing their visual spectacular.

We are not a walking family, but we'd always go to The Clumps. Whatever the weather when we went there, there would always be an atmosphere.

The Clumps are not widely known nor written about. They are 'looked after' by Earth Trust but there is simply one small sign in the small car park at the bottom. They are on the radar and visited by the artist/research group – Stone Club⁴; and with a contemporary claim to fame, the local band Radiohead filmed one of their live music videos there: 'Faust Arp' from their album 'In Rainbows'⁵. Recently (2018-22) archeologists, Digventures

have completed a dig which has further revealed a rare Iron Age blacksmith's workshop. Bear in mind although as an adult I am wholeheartedly a Londoner, Wittenham Clumps do call me back – mainly due to their visual forms.

PERSONAL TO UNIVERSAL

What is the relevance of Wittenham Clumps apart from this personal attachment? I started reflecting on this during the process of forming this exhibition and I think, through osmosis, they simultaneously struck a pictorial and sculptural chord in me; which undoubtedly equate to form within painting and an experience perhaps others will find familiar. Although not too dissimilar to many 'landscape' areas throughout the country the actual forms of The Clumps are, of course, man-made on a natural peak. Yet I can imagine that The Clumps could be visually isolated, cut out and almost 'lifted up' by hand or even

³ www.hedleythorne.com

⁴ www.stoneclub.rocks Run and founded in 2021 by artists Lally MacBeth and Matthew Shaw

⁵ Radiohead Faust Arp from album In Rainbows 2007



Wittenham Clumps by Angela Davison.⁶

miniaturised as a unique, unusual form and positioned, to be collaged elsewhere. Akin to painters in Siena (1300-1350), for example Duccio's work⁶ including shrinking the full city and placing it into a saint's hand or to approximately 1 metre scale akin to the rocks in 'Temptation of Christ on the mountain' (c.1308-11).

Christopher Neve's writing, on the relationship between landscape and Ben Nicholson's work captures something of this relationship to site. 'The sensations that went into the making of Nicholson's abstracts had very much to do with his places – especially in respect of their colour and bright light; but, though they derive from specific landscapes, the response they evoke is one of universal shared experience, not necessarily that of a particular place. It often feels as though this kind of painting originates in a state of mind, a condition, which takes on the shape and colour of

the painting (its locality) and then expands again in the mind of the viewer into a condition resulting from its implications... A painting of a vase or a house, for example, is personal for the artist but becomes a kind of symbol or sign which represents 'all' vases or 'all' houses. This must be true of any work of art but it has particular implications for landscape. A picture by Ben Nicholson invariably puts you in mind of the distant and near of mountains or sea or of light pouring over buildings far away'.⁸

PAUL NASH (1889-1946) AND WITTENHAM CLUMPS

I am not sure what came first in my formative experiences, it must have been The Clumps but Paul Nash's work came fast behind, as the works have always seemed to be there in my pictorial memory, as

6 I saw the Siene painters at 7 and again 11 years old, which has equally impacted the visual characteristics in my practice; for example foreshortening, shallow depth in the picture plane and an overarching interest in what makes an icon.

7 www.angeladavisonphotography.co.uk

8 Unquiet Landscape. Places and Ideas in 20th-Century British Painting. Christopher Neve

opposed to artists who were introduced to me or, even better, I discovered for myself. Perhaps, as a child, I would have seen his ink drawings, watercolours and lithographs of The Clumps at The Ashmolean and possibly even thought they were unexciting or humdrum at the time. Yet, if I did I could not have been further from the truth, and they have, on reflection been fixed in the back of my mind ever since and grown stronger in recent years.

Nash first visited Wittenham Clumps in 1911 and later wrote to a friend about them; "They stood up with extraordinary prominence above the river, two hills, both dome-like and each planted with a thick clump of trees whose mass had a curiously symmetrical sculptured form. Ever since I remember them the Clumps had meant something to me. I felt their importance long before I knew their history. This... was due almost entirely to their formal features rather than any associated force...in my mind they stood apart from other symbolism...it was the look of them that told most, whether on sight or in memory. They were the Pyramids of my small world."⁹

The Clumps featured in Nash's work from his first – in public collections – of 1912 'The Wood on the Hill' to late works 'Landscape of the Vernal Equinox III' 1944 and 'Landscape of the Wittenham Clumps' 1946; notably featuring them in many works in the latter years of his life, as a return to this key 'figure'.

Nash was attracted by both their volume and form. He had family living in the area and stayed regularly¹⁰ when he would capture The Clumps, how I see it, as the main character or use them almost as a collage element, in other later works. He wrote of his first drawings "I had come out to get a drawing of The Clumps. I wanted an image of them which would express what they meant to me. I realised that I might well make a dozen drawings and still find new aspects to portray..."¹¹

Importantly, for 'Flat Volume', Nash's visual renderings of The Clumps manage to accentuate their volume – the hills become more bulbous and the trees develop into an opened parasol hovering over the ground attached by tripods; bringing forth his interest of using the forms to create shapes within the compositions. He would rework the images of The Clumps into many different outputs, often repeating his icon; for example, 'Landscape for the Vernal Equinox' 1943 and 1944.

In his landscapes of ancient places such as The Clumps and Avebury ancient tracks imply human presence, emphasising the resilience and survival of such sites and remains. Notably this period of making was during and post WW1 and WW2 and also after Nash's prominent war artist career; in which volumes, shapes and planes similarly appear, for example 'A Night of Bombardment' 1919-20 and 'Totes Meer' (Dead Sea) 1940-1.¹²

In the catalogue for 'Paul Nash, Places' he acknowledged The Clumps as 'a universal and personal symbol, a vehicle for his imagination'.¹³

PAUL NASH – 'EQUIVALENTS FOR THE MEGALITHS'

I am personally obsessed with Nash's painting 'Equivalents for the Megaliths' 1935. This is the anchor image for me and epitomises what I have termed as 'Flat Volume.' It is most likely not Wittenham Clumps in the background as researchers think it is Silbury Hill, just over an hour's drive from The Clumps. It is near and part of the complex of Avebury (stones) in Wiltshire managed by English Heritage.

When meeting and discussing the premise of the exhibition with the invited artists, they were also very engaged with Nash's work and return to it as a stimulus for many reasons; mainly surrounding the pictorial structure of the works.

9 Paul Nash 1949 Paul Nash Outline Published by The Lively Atys. 1949 updated 1988 with Preface by Andrew Causey. Page 111 and 122-123

10 As a young man, Nash regularly visited Sinodun House near Wallingford, in what was then the Berkshire countryside. The house belonged to Alfred Dodd Wells, cousin to Nash's father, William Harry Nash.

11 <https://www.nashclumps.org/early.html> also Paul Nash Outline Published by The Lively Atys. 1949 updated 1988 with Preface by Andrew Causey. Page pages 122-123

12 Paul Nash: The Ghosts of War (Ep1) – British Art At War. First Broadcast 2014. BBC ARTS (BBC Four). Andrew Graham-Dixon www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04j2yww

13 'Paul Nash, Places' South Bank Centre 1989 p22 Eds Joanna Dew Alexandra Noble

'Equivalents for the Megaliths' 1935 had a prequel – 'Landscape of the Megaliths' 1934 (British Council Collection)¹⁴ in which Nash's use of collage – in terms of using landscape – 'objects from various locations and composing them pictorially together' is evident. The central image of 'Landscape of the Megaliths' is an ambiguous shape, known to be one of the Avebury Stones, flanked either side by Wittenham Clumps – this time The Clumps are cast into flat symbolic shapes.

Nash first visited Avebury in 1933 before significant restoration had reinstated the stones. Many stones in the great circle had fallen, and were overgrown with grass, few remained upright and their meaning and importance were unclear. In 'Equivalents for the Megaliths' Andrew Causey notes that Nash was attracted to their imperfection and mystery, re-interpreting the form of the great stones through his own imagination using modern forms such as tins, building supplies or children's bricks presenting the ancient structures in a new way. 'Nash was interested in the polarity between rough-hewn forms and the perfected geometrical shapes in 'Equivalents for the Megaliths' where he represented the stones in terms of contemporary sculptural and machine-made forms which have minimal reference to their actual shape...'¹⁵

In 1937 Nash wrote to Lance Sieveking that although he was aware of their importance as symbols of antiquity he was intent on focusing on 'their forms opposed to their surroundings, both by virtue of their actual composition of lines and masses and planes, directions and volumes; and to insist only upon the dramatic qualities of a composition of shapes equivalent to the stone or leaning masses, grouped together in a scene of open fields and hills. Beyond that resolve the picture cannot be traced, logically. It developed inevitably in its own

way."¹⁶ This is a significant letter in which Nash outlines key ideas, further examined by the artists in 'Flat Volume'.

It is important to note that Nash also made small sculptural work and wall reliefs during this period of productivity, for example, 'Forest' 1936-7¹⁷, which comprises four hand carved wooden branch-like shapes attached to a wooden panel.

PAUL NASH: OBJECTS IN PAINTINGS

"The Life of the Inanimate Object"¹⁸

Emma Chambers, a curator of the Paul Nash exhibition at Tate Britain (2016) included a chapter in the catalogue called 'The Life of the Inanimate Object', cited from Nash's own text, of the same name – the key to the forms that Nash chose to work¹⁹. Chambers explains; 'In the 1930s Nash began collecting natural objects and thinking of them in formal terms. The found object became important in its own right as an 'object-personage'.'

Herbert Read, art critic, poet, professor and amongst other notable activities – co-founder of the ICA with Roland Penrose, recalled that Nash would often have about him 'a number of curious objects – strangely shaped stones, streaked pebbles, dried lichens, fragments of bark, crystals, pressed leaves – objects which served as stimulants to his imagination'. Nash's photographs reveal other small objects in his possession such as the wooden pieces that appear in 'Equivalents for the Megaliths'.²⁰

Nash selected a vast variety of forms: a tree, a pile of logs, shells, birds' eggs, a carving, an archway, a stepladder, drawing instruments in his studio, bits of discarded toys that he had stuck together as a kind of sculpture. These were often things with simple, ordered shapes, and he wrote of their 'formal' appeal. He had discovered

14 <https://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/search/object/landscape-of-the-megaliths-nash-1934-p3/keywords:paul-nash>

15 Page 27 Andrew Causey. Paul Nash. Paintings and watercolours. Tate Gallery 1975 for the exhibition of 12 November to 28 December 1975 designed and published by the gallery publications department director Norman Reid.

16 Page 86 Paul Nash. Paintings and watercolours. Tate Gallery 1975 for the exhibition of 12 November to 28 December 1975 designed and published by the gallery publications department director Norman Reid.

17 Housed at Leeds Museum and Galleries (City Art Gallery)

18 Paul Nash 'The Life of an inanimate object' Country Life, 1 May 1937. British Library, London. Original cited in Paul Nash Landscape and the Life of Objects. Chapter 7 titled 'The Life of The Inanimate Object' by Andrew Causey published by Lund Humphries. 2013. And 'Paul Nash' Tate Publishing 2016. Edited by Emma Chambers

19 In which, in the foreword, pays owed to Andrew Causey's work including 'Landscape and the life of objects' 2013 and previous publication in 1980

20 Nash, outline, page 53 Also cited Paul Nash. Landscape and the life of objects, Andrew Causey published by Lund Humphries. 2013. Pg 127 & 128

how to make these elemental shapes out of nature from an early age and both this practice and collecting remained throughout his career. Nash's contemporary author – Anthony Bertram – noted that Nash often used small geometric objects, enlarging and placing them in a landscape setting where their placement acquired a mysterious monumental presence.²¹

It is these 'small found contemporary quotidian objects' which hold the key to the central interest to 'Flat Volume.' 'Equivalents for the Megaliths' 1935 was painted when Nash was thinking about the relationship of his work to abstraction and had reflected on the difficulty of abandoning 'partially organic features' in favour of 'complete abstractions.'²²

Nash's essay 'Nest of the Wild Stones' 1937 for MyFanwy Evan's publication 'Painter's Objects': reflected on this process and the combination of chance and design that characterised these works: "People say, why do you paint these things? Why are you not content with things as they are; applying to them painting as understood? All Nature as it is seems better so than any imitation of it... But we may take the elements of Nature and make what we choose, without reference to existing law and order, or even painting as understood'. That seems worth doing."²³

PAUL NASH – PHOTOGRAPHY

When I visited the 2016 Tate exhibition 'Paul Nash'²⁴, I remember being curious about the photographs he had taken²⁵; which I subsequently explored in the book 'Paul Nash's photographs, Document and Image' (Tate 1973).

In 1931 Nash had received a box-camera from his wife Margaret.²⁶ His work as a photographer complemented his research as a painter. Nash saw photography as a conjoined artistic outlet as well as one to gather imagery for his paintings; we can see

this through the fact that he produced books of his photographs during his life. It is clear, when looking through these photographs, of his obsession and the continuous thread of volumed form as the main 'character'. In a letter to his friend Ruth Clark in 1934 he wrote ...'photography has enormously widened my picture vision so that when I begin on a period of painting I shall feel the benefit.'²⁷

Eighteen of his photographs were published in his lifetime and a small number were shown at the International Surrealist Exhibition and other retrospective exhibitions between 1935 and 1945. Examples of his photographs that are relevant to 'Equivalents for the Megaliths' and in turn to 'Flat Volume,' are: 'Poised Objects' c.1934-5, 'Still life on Car roof' 1934, 'Still life on a door mat' 1934, 'Stones Avebury' 1942, 'Steps in a field near Swanage' 1935, 'Stones and seaweed' 1935, 'Coast at Kimmeridge, Dorset' 1935.

The photograph 'Still life on Car Roof' is especially significant as it correlates with this era of his works as a carefully considered physical composition of tin cans, a car soft roof, other geometric shaped domestic or found forms. Nash had clearly used these as source material to construct his composition for his ambiguous protagonist, set into the familiar British undulating hill landscape.

PAUL NASH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FORM – 'FLAT VOLUME' – IN PAINTING

Nash's success in capturing a dramatic quality in his painting was partly inspired by the art of Giorgio de Chirico, especially his use of unusual architectural designs and exaggerated perspectives. This can be seen in Nash's 'Landscape at Iden' 1929 which features a quotidian garden stake and log basket in the foreground within a distorted perspective.

As has been noted by many critics, Nash's visits to Avebury had a decisive impact on his work. He wrote in his autobiography:

21 'Paul Nash' Tate Publishing 2016. Edited by Emma Chambers Page 37 and Paul Nash The Portrait of An Artist Anthony Bertram Published by Faber & Faber, London, 1955

22 abstract art, the listener, 17 of August 19, 32, 2000 page 79 to 81

23 Paul Nash, 'Nest of wild stones'. Page 38 to 42 in The painters object edited by MyFanwy Evans London Gerald Howe LTD 1937

24 'Paul Nash' Tate Publishing 2016. Edited by Emma Chambers

25 Later formed an exhibition 'Paul Nash's photographs 'Document and Image' for a Tate 1977

26 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04j2yvv> Paul Nash: The Ghosts of War. BBC Four. Andrew Graham-Dixon. 14 Sept 2014.

27 'Paul Nash's photographs, document and image', The Tate gallery editor Andrew Causey and Clare Colvin. 1977. Norman Reid Tate Director. page 11



Black and white negative, still life on car roof, 1934, Paul Nash.
Photo: Tate. Presented by the Paul Nash Trust 1970.

'Last summer I walked in a field near Avebury where two rough monoliths stand up sixteen feet high, miraculously patterned with black and orange lichen, remnants of an avenue of stones which led to the Great Circle. A mile away, a green pyramid casts a gigantic shadow. In the hedge, at hand, the white trumpet of a convolvulus turns from its spiral stem, following the sun. In my art I would solve such an equation'²⁸ ...of form.

Other examples that exemplify Nash's use of what we have so far discussed as 'Flat Volume' can be seen in 'Swan Song'²⁹ (1927/8), 'Dead Spring' (1928/9), and 'Mineral Object' (1935) where he uses forms to construct his unique visual style of composition.

Herbert Read wrote in 1944; "'Swan Song' seems open to an imaginative freedom of treatment. But actually the geometric tendency was first to flare up again, and a series of still-lifes, of which the 'Dead Spring' of 1928 is typical, was to intervene. At first sight these rigid architectural structures, in which instruments of precision sometimes make a symbolical appearance, are far removed from the irrational composition of 'Swan Song'. But they can nevertheless be described as an attempt to carry the urge to abstraction into the

realm of fantasy."³⁰ Again; form, shape and volume are the constants.

When I approached the artists I had selected to exhibit work in 'Flat Volume' with an outline of the show which identified Nash's influence on the concept, there was a simple resounding 'I love his work too' which re-affirmed my initial selection in terms of a similar affinity to painting and form.

OBJECTS IN PAINTINGS – PAINTINGS OF OBJECTS. AKA 'THE PAINTER'S OBJECT'³¹ AND COLLECTING

As critics have noted, collecting an eclectic array of objects, from an early age, was important for Nash and is a common thread, passion and habit shared by many of the artists in 'Flat Volume'.

Maurice Rheims in 'La Vie étrange des objets' observes 'For the child, collecting represents the most rudimentary way to exercise control over the outer world: by laying things out, grouping them, handling them.'³² While Jean Baudrillard wrote in 'The System of Collecting' "...any given object can have two functions: it can be utilised, or it can be possessed. (If the latter)... its destiny is to be collected.... it ceases to be a carpet, a table, a compass,

28 Nash, Outline. 1949 pg 15

29 Painted at Iden near Rye in Sussex

30 Nash, Outline. 1949 and 'Paul Nash' Tate Publishing 2016. Edited by Emma Chambers

31 'The Painter's Object' Evans, Myfanwy (Editor) Published by Gerald Howe LTD at The Curwen Press 1937- Which featured the essay from Paul Nash 'The Nest of Wild Stones' Page 38 – 42 in which he referenced an admiration of Brancusi's sculptural work

32 Maurice Rheims, *La Vie étrange des objets* (Paris, 1956), p. 28. and *The Culture of Collecting* Edited by John Eisner and Roger Cardinal. Reaktion Books. 1994

or a knick-knack and instead turns into an 'object' or a 'piece'...Once the object stops being defined by its function, its meaning is entirely up to the subject, while simultaneously being a symbol of the person who owns it."and in the artist's case too – those who paint them.³³

Matisse described how he saw his collected objects as 'actors in his paintings'³⁴, taking on different roles in different paintings by representing them with a variety of colours, positions, perspectives and techniques, transformed as they interact with the space and objects around them.

A high percentage of the artists I visited, either at their studios or homes – in person or virtually have collections or 'set-ups' of things which they have amassed throughout their lives that they 'hold dear'³⁵. Sometimes this is for sentimental reasons, but more often for a curiosity of form, shape and texture, that they need to keep – as a stimulus of sorts – but not necessarily want to 'solve' as such; more as a visual reference, source of inspiration, intrigue, irritation or comfort; tiny equivalents of a muse perhaps. Or, like Nash, as an 'object-personage'.

"'The popular life of things' is the expression to see the connection between the social and aesthetic aspects of cultural production. It proves that the valence of things is not the effect of cultural codes imposed from above but rather of the working of environmental conditions and material affordances in which all objects commingle....the method for reading materiality through the lens of popular culture reflects on how the valences of things arise from the resonance between the external cultural conditions and internal capacities of matter that contribute to the shaping of objects and our entanglement with material reality in the popular."³⁶ (Malinowski and Lebek, 2017)

In conversation with Jennifer Caroline Campbell, one of the 'Flat Volume' artists, she explained how she sees gathering

objects or forms and placing them in relation to each other as a very human thing to do. She cited writer Ursula K. Le Guin³⁷ who described how 'prehistoric people gathered things – a bit of rolled bark or leaf, or a net woven from (their) own hair... collecting, searching, bundle-making and shrine-building, whose most important tool is a container for commonplace and sacred things.' Again, we come back to the importance of collecting; and placement.

The selection of artists' enduring preoccupation is with how volume is conjured, achieved and explored – through real and unreal 'objects' in their works with a wide variety of strategies, instincts and processes. On occasion, creating tangibility of 'haptic' objects.

I have a working hypothesis that, this creative preoccupation with 'volume' in artworks is a response to contemporary environmental factors. In brief; the chaotic political world we are surrounded by; our heightened sense of environment in connection to sustainability – on many levels – all hold a huge and gradually increasing impact upon us alongside possibly the most prevalent; that we increasingly engage with the world through our screens. Therefore, creating this instinctive haptic desire to concentrate on the hand-held and perplexing forms we are drawn to, is almost an unintended respite... In addition, to contextualise both these 'real' or 'invented' forms/objects have the ability to 'reassure'³⁸ and 'offer security'³⁹ in terms of a constant anchor for us within our perplexing environment.

This recent quote from Dean Kissick echoes or rather is at least a parallel with this idea; "I think because of the great speeding up of life and great glut of information and the sudden availability of all of the past to you at all times, I think it really encourages going back and going back and holding onto things; as we just kind of fell out of linear time."⁴⁰

33 The Culture of Collecting Edited by John Eisner and Roger Cardinal. Reaktion Books. 1994. Jean Baudrillard The System of Collecting. Translated by Roger Cardinal. Pg 8 and 13

34 Matisse in the Studio. Royal Academy of Arts. Gallery guide 2017. Toured to Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA 2018.

35 'Hold everything dear – dispatches on survival and resistance'. John Berger. 2008 and 2016 Verso Books.

36 'Materiality and Popular Culture – The Popular Life of Things' Edited by Anna Malinowski and Caroline Lebek. Published by Routledge. 2017. Pg 8

37 Ursula K. Le Guin 'The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction' (1986)

38 Jean Baudrillard. The system of Objects. Radical Thinkers. Verso. A Marginal System: Collecting. Translated by James Benedict. 1996, 2005. Page 95

39 The Culture of Collecting Edited by John Eisner and Roger Cardinal. Reaktion Books. 1994. The System of Collecting. Translated by Roger Cardinal. Page 10

40 Dean Kissick – on Dialogues The David Dzwirner podcast – 'has contemporary art lost its edge' 4 Dec 2024

If the term 'Flat Volume' acts as an umbrella or perhaps more visually fittingly, a nest⁴¹, then through these works, to my mind, there has developed four broad ways of thinking about 'Flat Volume's' sub-sections.

'The nest of wild stones' 1937 by Paul Nash is both a painting and a text of the same name; and the title which is visually fitting to the 'Flat Volume' sub-sections below, which could be held within the nest.

To bring them to the fore these include;

- ONE Placement of Parts:** absolute idiosyncratic specificity of placement.
- TWO Object(ness)/Form:** desire for 'solid' forms – within the picture plane – alongside a pull to unusual structures.
- THREE Relief – concave/convex:** the melding boundaries of painting and sculpture.
- FOUR Illusion of form or relief.**

ONE

PLACEMENT OF PARTS

AKA: ABSOLUTE IDIOSYNCRATIC SPECIFICITY OF PLACEMENT

'Composition,' to differing extents, is a main factor in the majority of painters' preoccupations.

With the set of artists in this sub-section it is the vital key and backbone that holds the work. Each artist has various strategies, conceptualisations or instincts, for the location of the forms – on a slippery sliding scale of ambiguity. Yet for each artist, it is clear that the decisions made during the construction of the work have absolute idiosyncratic specificity of placement of parts.

I am drawn, like many, to Philip Guston's paintings and how he assembled a composition, to my mind, with a similar compositional disquiet to these artists in 'Placements of Parts'. Guston had well documented views on his process and 'forms' in his work – often using the same elements: "Where do you put a form? It will move all around, bellow out and shrink, and sometimes it winds up where it was in the first place. But at the end it feels

different, and it had to make the voyage. I..can not accept...a form that has not been lived through."⁴² He continued on another occasion, "you might say objects...became dissolved and then somehow the whole field becomes the reality. There's something very fascinating to me about the idea of painting a single object...My paintings look more real to me than what is outdoors. (The aim) to see, in a painting, what one has always wanted to see, that hasn't, until now. For the first time."⁴³

Guston echoes some of Nash's feelings "...if I speak of having a subject to paint, I mean there is a forgotten place of being and things, which I need to remember. I want to see this place. I paint what I want to see...I think the true magic only comes out when it exists on this imaginary plane....it's one of the most mysterious and complex things to understand...There's something very frustrating, necessary about this metaphysical plane that Painting exists on."⁴⁴

41 Paul Nash's painting 'The nest of wild stones' 1937 arts Council collection, South bank centre London.

42 Philip Guston, Clark Coolidge (2011). "Philip Guston: Collected Writings, Lectures, and Conversations", p.54, Univ of California Press and Philip Guston. I paint what I want to see' Penguin books 2022. page 31

43 Philip Guston. I paint what I want to see' Penguin books 2022. Pages 18, 30 and 244

44 ibid Page 3 and 6

In 2019 Amy Sillman and Michelle Kuo curated an exhibition 'Shape of Shapes'⁴⁵ chosen from works in MoMa's collection.⁴⁶ Kuo stated 'To draw something, to paint something, to sculpt something you always have to deal with shape. Even just to live, in a body, you're dealing with shape.' While Sillman explained that the exhibition's focus was on 'the duality of shape and shadow or lack thereof...The key thing is that the shadow is never stable'.⁴⁷ Sillman interestingly has 'a lack of convergence.... a visual condition where one cannot see things/forms, going back in space,' i.e. not determining depth whilst she also 'loves medieval pictorial space'⁴⁸; both notably ideas and references linking to 'Flat Volume'.

MĂDĂLINA ZAHARIA's work, a pair of large wall pieces titled 'Negative space as things' 2017, could be described as a structured translation of life, especially as it draws from a period of Zaharia's recent personal history during which the battling of financial precariousness came with a lot of creative implications.⁴⁹

The piece is part of a group of works that attempt to shift and subvert the power relationships at play within this process by using design and visual discourse in order to translate and transform negative, numeral, figures into something of cultural value and aesthetic gain.

'Negative space as things' depicts a very exaggerated and magnified version of Zaharia's accounting process, in which two pieces of paper were stuck to the living-room wall in an attempt to keep track of all her credit card spending and payments. The two images are meant to be recording and marking down all her financial transactions and undertakings, while at the same time converting any sum of money into an abstract and imaginative object.⁵⁰

The placement of 'objects' which have their own internal meaning have been 'lifted' from the original source and therefore have been determined through consequence.

It is then the particular shaped forms we are left with, that we in turn become seduced by through intrigue, which is an unnerving feeling when you realise the weight of the process and circumstances. This is all the more ringing true in the cost of living crisis striking a conversation about value and objects alongside our hugely object overpopulated environments.

CHARLEY PETERS' work exists at the intersection of painting and digital experience, where the boundaries between the physical and the virtual blur. Engaging with the perceptual shifts of our screen-saturated world, her paintings interrogate how we navigate and construct spatial understanding in an era shaped by AI, video games, and algorithmic logic.

Peters describes her newest works as a collaboration between her own human creativity and a computer's 'imagination'. Beginning with descriptions of her previous paintings, she fed these into a text-to-image AI generator, prompting the machine to reinterpret her visual language. The results – both familiar and estranged – become a catalyst for further exploration, as she reclaims and retranslates these digital outputs back into paint.⁵¹

In 'Soft Crash, Hard Feelings' 2025 Peters conjures an illusionistic yet ambiguous space where interwoven forms appear both solid and ephemeral. The composition evokes a sense of immersion, like stepping onto a film set or navigating the spatial logic of a video game – an environment where objects hover, recede, or assert their presence through implied weight and shadow. Echoing the metaphysical unease of Paul Nash, Peters arranges her 'icons' with a precise yet instinctive placement that transforms them into a kind of visual syntax. Some forms float, untethered, while others appear anchored by shadow or compositional weight, creating a delicate tension between fixity and flux.⁵²

45 I was reminded and pointed to this context by Flat Volume artist – Sarah Poots.

46 Artist's choice: Amy Sillman – The Shape of Shape, opened 21.10.19 at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, organised by Amy Sillman with Michelle Kuo and Jenny Harris. <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5175>

47 Spring 2020 October Journal Issue 172 titled 'Shape: a conversation'. Amy Sillman discussion with David Joselit and Michele Kuo. pg 136

48 'A brush with' podcast – The Art Newspaper Amy Sillman interviewed by Ben Luke 22 Feb 2023.

49 Correspondance with Mădălina Zaharia 1.12.24

50 DEBT. solo exhibition at Tintype Gallery, (London) 2017

51 In conversation and correspondence with Charley Peters March 2025

52 Sarah Longworth-West interviewing Charley Peters for Turps Banana Painting Magazine Issue 29 AW 2024

Through this interplay of optical depth and material flatness, Peters challenges binary oppositions – abstraction and figuration, representation and illusion – revealing painting as both a tactile and conceptual space. Her forms whichever ways she generates them have an instructive purposefulness to their construction and placement. And it is the specific placement of these seemingly disparate – known yet unknown object forms, which seem unfixed – that builds vital relationships within the composition.

YUMI KATAYAMA's work 'Visitor' 2023 is a breathtaking non-world vista, simultaneously delightful and terrifying, perhaps a true reaction of/to our contemporary dystopian world. Whilst using the view of a landscape for us to grasp the recognisable, a thunderstorm happens, a physically volume-bound experience, enlivening the landscape into a visually connected space. Three joyfully light and pastel-coloured air forms bound down and around the vista. We are curious about what they relate to but equally enjoy their ambiguity and pure enjoyment in painted form/non-form.

Katayama says "These paintings are from a suite I have been working on called Greed. It's darker than most of my previous work, and more reliant on the example set by the old masters. But instead of taking things from their world, I try to send stuff back to them from our world."

Waldemar Januszczak writes of her works, "It's clear from Katayama's recent paintings that she has been spending time with the old masters, taking things in, imbibing them. Not styles or techniques, fashions or attitudes, but moods: shivery, delicate, elusive, whispery, charged moods. Moods that speak of sanctity and solemnity. Moods with thoughtfulness baked in. Moods of then, rather than now.....She has a magpie eye for bijouterie and things that glisten. Most of the new paintings appear to be landscapes, with skies, waters, horizons. But nowhere is recognisable."⁵³

In 'Visitor' it is Katayama's choice of placement of these soft floating forms that open up questions about the compositional decisions she has made, which reflect back to us her 'absolute – idiosyncratic – specificity of placement'.

In conversation with **SARAH POOTS**, about the core thinking and interwoven links that were being formed at the earlier stages of 'Flat Volume'; it became clear that a key driver for Poots, whilst making her work, was the intuitive placement of her gathered source imagery, which struck a chord with her. The 'objects' she uses are vehicles which she selects more for their form and shape, than for their original function or historical meaning.⁵⁴

The body of paintings, of which 'Many Parts' 2024 is one, are of a collection of torn out paper images or objects she has collated or happened upon, with a reduced interest in the 'object' itself. She has then arranged the fragments for the painting's purpose, as an impromptu display, with the element of fleeting time; like a low-fi photoshoot that only stays for a brief time.

We can almost get in a tangle when trying to conceptually pin the works down and it is this tussling that enhance them. They speak of many art historical tropes – of drapery within Renaissance work, of a still life genre, yet flipped. Poots explains, "Taking objects and surfaces from everyday archaeologies, my work plays with placement, arrangement and order. The paintings are immersed in the role of touch in our increasingly remote lives."⁵⁵ She further explained to me that the 'objects' 'appear both as cut outs and 'stand ins'- as fragments arranged over surfaces, allowing connections to be drawn between paintings. Littered with hand tied or taped mementos, the relationship this sense of touch is central within these works, that which is close at hand is used to craft and signal memorialisation. Here, it is the slight, the personal and the sentimental which is given space and time to hold our attention."⁵⁶

53 Greed: The Artist as Pirate. Yumi Katayama exhibition at White Conduit Projects July 2024 essay extract by Waldemar Januszczak

54 Studio Visit. Nottingham. Oct 2024

55 Gertrude accessed 7.10.24

56 Correspondence with Sarah Poots – Sept 2024

She is occupied with a pictorial space that is of thin slivers of spatial depth; vitrines, and to me, Italian shop front displays, everything being pushed upfront – an economy of space and display.

Eliza Bonham Carter writes, “Poots’ works play with the grid, the broken shapes of an object in shallow space, that drive us to reimagine the object in its original three dimensional form, in a continuing making and unmaking loop.”⁵⁷

My initial draw towards **SCOTT MCCRACKEN**’s paintings, including his piece exhibited in ‘Flat Volume’, ‘Clockmove’, 2021-23 came from the enjoyment of confusion, that nothing seemed pinned down and, of course, the placement where he concludes with his finished works. They clearly speak to the era of works produced around the time of our central work by Paul Nash; and consequently of similar obsessions for image making. He cites Bruno Goller and Vicor Willing as a couple of his clear contextual links.⁵⁸

In describing his practice McCracken writes, “The work lives mostly on a small scale, the nameable and almost nameable motifs shuffle between the diagrammatic, the corporeal and the nebulous without ever fully settling. The pictures become worked out and reworked, often overworked and undone. They aren’t really about anything, it may be more accurate to say there is an anti-aboutness. They are what they are, which is themselves. They could be described as scenes, scenarios, coincidences. They don’t depict or correspond to the world as it is, but rather to some kind of parallel world. The paintings are containers for an other-worldliness to manifest.”⁵⁹

These works being autonomous and authentic, lend themselves open to concentrating on form, colour and crucially their placement, overlaid and sometimes blanked out forms which can become iconography. Artist Rachel Jeffers⁶⁰ describes them as “Toggling between construction and alchemy, McCracken uses elemental shapes as building blocks. He combines depth with flatness, light with

shadow, lava with water. He establishes the ground, then reconsiders, and chooses the ether.”

LOUISA CHAMBERS’ ‘Crab’ 2020 is made in response to her obsession with hand patterned paper maquettes, which she folds and manipulates into temporary three-dimensional structures to form the basis of the still life forms she paints. Within this series of works, Chambers has both complex city-like communes of structures which play out harmoniously or individual forms which act, at times, as portraits – for example in ‘Crab’.

The shadow space(s) are key in these forms as they give us a sense of scale and the visible move from ‘thing’ to shadow seem to finally meld one back into the other, ground up.

During our correspondence, Chambers explained how she approaches her works, “Through close observation, I have become intrigued by the patterned surfaces and the juxtaposition of colour and geometry on the form. The colours divert from the original paper models and instead are intuitively selected during the painting process. These forms are recorded from set ups becoming an abstracted still life, often from a frontal view perspective inviting the viewer to imagine the objects from behind.”⁶¹

The patterns are appropriated motifs deriving from architectural sources such as walls, fences, floors or rooftops. These found motifs are memorised from daily encounters such as from walks made locally or further afield visual research.

In conversation with **KEITH ASHCROFT** about his work including ‘Placeholder’ 2024 he explained his approach, ‘Flat areas of volume are introduced at key stages throughout the process of making to insert a sense of urgency into the proceedings, to affect change quickly and to establish new pathways into the surface of a painting. Flat forms often serve as obstinate motifs and structures, dissonant formal devices which seem at odds with the existing narrative elements. They operate as markers in

57 Text by Eliza Bonham Carter on the occasion of selecting Sarah Poots as her alumni for ‘Fully Awake’ series of exhibitions which was a cross generational Painting exhibitions found the UK about teaching Painting in UK Art Schools. Holden Gallery Manchester, 2021

58 During a studio visit with Scott McCracken October 2024

59 Scott McCracken articulating his practice on PaintTalk platform – Oct 2023

60 <https://racheljeffers.com/home.html>

61 Correspondence with Louisa Chambers 20.9.24 and Studio Visit October 2024 Nottingham

pictorial space for bringing territory closer to the viewer.' He continued, 'Excessive layering, overlapping and overpainting facilitates this compulsion to intervene, obstruct, conceal or rupture the painting surface. Advancing, receding and integrating multiple time spaces via a range of different source material, flattening whole areas of the painting out in an 'unnatural' way to achieve a process of renewal and reconstruction, the ultimate goal being to achieve a sense of harmony through consolidation.'⁶²

Through our discussion of 'Flat Volume' and Paul Nash; Ashcroft's own methods... his dioramas and 'set ups' came into focus. He explains how he uses the models as an anchor for this painted construction. It was a pleasant surprise then that I saw a side room full of his collected modernist wooden models, a lot of which are children's garages.⁶³

As his partner and fellow artist Jenny Eden writes; Ashcroft's paintings are disrupted and reconfigured to form new worlds operating between realities. Loaded with visual information, his almost-spaces gather and dissolve in plain sight in a continual process of becoming. These paintings are never fully realised in a conventional sense, but unfold through the act of looking, taking on the agency of other objects of being...Comprising a repertoire of painted motifs – tables, platforms, columns and curtains, walls, chairs, corners and cracks, to mention a few – Ashcroft transforms the apparatus of everyday life into lush painterly arrangements, rich in the evocation of a wandering mind...Manipulating colour into objects and surfaces, he is attuned to the material qualities of paint colour and its ability to represent things as well as itself... People are rarely depicted in Ashcroft's paintings but implied through suggestions of objects made for and by people, inviting the viewer to interact with the work on their own terms, becoming a person in a painting or imagining a piece of clothing coming to life.⁶⁴

NICHOLAS HATFULL describes to me that his 'paintings are synecdoches and trifles at the same time; a slideshow of impressions slowly fusing into a larger form. Operating in

a space between strategy and improvisation, I cultivate scenarios in which my imagery and medium contrive to eke out their own agency; an entangled dialogue between myself and the surface.'⁶⁵

Hatfull's practice of utilising fragments and weaving or congealing them together softly as one, to my mind, is why his work holds such energy and equal calm contemplation within them. The process echoes the overarching ideas within 'Placement of Parts'; as his dexterity in assembling and locating seemingly separate imagery, to make anew, comes to fruition in his compositions.

Hatfull guides liquid colour to uncover hidden pathways in his compositions, his personal quality of executing a painting is one of careful temporisation; redacting forms and restoring them, fragmenting and absorbing. His paintings might include imagery pulled from films, Boro textiles and the artist's daughter's drawings. Importantly, they all flicker with 'afterimages' and are frayed and sutured like fabric. The often loaded recognisable but unpinable object-forms he chooses seem unfettered, afloat and in transition. Hatfull seeks to fragment and dislocate his subject matter until it begins to phase in and out of the picture plane. He notes 'an accumulation of forms passing through the labyrinth of process until it reaches a floating balance. Chronology and perspective become flattened, leaving a space of diffusion in which rests an anchor or two of association, like the memory of a dream, a jigsaw on a riverbed.'⁶⁶

In a 2023 conversation with itinerant New York gallery Dracula's Revenge, Hatfull discussed his relationship to painting: "A mirage feels like a good metaphor because it's an apparition, an image displaced from elsewhere that's subject to distortion... Painting, as I understand it, is a chain of decisions. You can see the next one or two stepping stones or lily pads – the decision is usually how are you going to go about trying to land on that next step – whether your arms are flailing or you're full of poise. I'm wanting to avoid either being totally arbitrary or making the wrong kind of sense."

62 Correspondence interview 12 December 2024

63 Studio Visit. Salford. Oct 2024

64 Keith Ashcroft Living and Breathing By Jenny Eden For the 'Cut From Cloth', Huddersfield Art Gallery, 2022.

65 In correspondence with Nicholas Hatfull 15 May 2025

66 Nicholas Hatfull Afters Forking 22 November 2024 – 8 January 2025 Josh Lilley Gallery, London

Having spoken together about the ideas within 'Flat Volume' for near two years, Hatfull has noted how the ideas we discussed have been melting in and out of his studio work. They have also been percolating the ideas in his essay, for this publication, during the production of his new works.

SARAH LONGWORTH-WEST. My painting practice is focused on creating ambiguous non-objects and non-spaces that are hard to locate but overall give the atmosphere of echoing and distilling 'things' or fragments of place, in which people occasionally hold or inhabit.

Rooted in questioning what makes an icon; I have always been image-driven. Aged 7, I first visited Siena, Italy and saw memorable examples of iconography; the flattening of spaces, paring down of imagery into beguiling, mesmeric 'solid' images, alongside editing a form through reduction. This, coupled with my formative experience of physical forms at Wittenham Clumps – cited earlier in this text – gives us a way to view how my practice exists alongside some key drivers.

I gradually collate my source material from the local suburban area, travelling elsewhere and intentionally or unintentionally 'happening upon a 'thing'' that might be suitable to capture for a painting. My archive of low-fi phone photographs is later used to draw from, 'acting as prompts'. Isolating specific objects, I visually 'lift' them out, drawing only the elements which hold key qualities. Ultimately, I am interested in form, colour, a sense of movement and volume alongside their visual placement within compositions; together with ideas surrounding degradation, the values of material culture of objects and their lineage alongside and intertwined with crucial formal painting decisions and histories.

Importantly to my practice, I make a traditional natural gesso, adding pigment; overlapping layers to fuse colour combinations. When closely inspected, after sanding, the intricate nuances of the material are revealed. Similarly to the unpredictable nature of source material – even though I am experienced in making

grounds – they throw up surprises of how the colour has deposited, which I react to with my collated working-drawings.

'Placement of Parts' is how I consider building my compositions. They are formed by personal logic and instinct; equally visually bound and thematically loaded for a subtle inner narrative which may or may not be accessible. Viewing the practice as a whole allows increasing insights to observations of our environments.

The 'Remnants' which occasionally atop the paintings, are dried left-over excess paint-mass from my gesso paint process. The Remnants have been gathered into my 'regular' painting practice; becoming – only when a natural relationship occurs – integrated into the compositional whole... as seen in 'Swell'.

My approach to ground, imagery collection and occasional use of 'remnants' all encapsulate an interest in anti-perfectionism; simply attempting to take things as they are and bring them into focus.⁶⁷

CARL ROWE's 'Dumbbell and Gemstone' 2024 is a joyous interplay of decipherable and indecipherable objects, shapes, colour and texture; overlaid and layered up to bring into question what or who might be a protagonist, yet all forms are equal. With an explicit object-based title, Rowe wants to include us in the surreal enjoyment of form, perhaps to negotiate our own collection of useful/useless or less used objects. During our conversation, Rowe stated, "I make paintings, prints, drawings, and objects. My method is generally a speculative, fluid, and spontaneous approach to making. The subjects of my artworks are diverse and include gas clouds, calibrations, marker points, geometry, molecular bonds, domestic objects, containers. Real space coexists with imaginary space in an implausible graphic paradigm. Physical things are incorporated into paintings and painted surfaces evolve into concrete objects. Colour is notable, in some works naturalistic and low key, but in others it is ramped-up to a feverish vibrancy. All of this appears within seemingly nonsensical and vexing unions. There is a strong sense of duality and unseen forces at play.

⁶⁷ Noteworthy for the process of the 'Flat Volume' project: SL-W text was written by her on 15 May 2025. At the end of editing the full 'Curator's text', after interviewing and writing all other artists' texts and after a period of reflection on the project as a whole.

Some works have no discernible subject matter, others are like signs or cyphers or warnings.”⁶⁸

Rowe’s speculative methods of making allow an apparently relaxed air of object-like parts to form a whole equal with one another, bringing into view our questioning of deemed hierarchies in our object-based world.

For his recent exhibition entitled ‘Pile-up’ Rowe explained ‘...the decorative elements are a veneer under which there is a struggle, a feverish and encrypted portrayal of psychological, social and political subjects – a pile up.’⁶⁹

BEN COVE (1974 – 2016) was a friend and peer of mine and many other London based artists; we met on our Higher Education Teaching course in 2009. Notably, a retrospective show of Ben’s work was held in 2023-24 at SPACE, Ilford; curated by his sister, artist – Melanie Cove; with an accompanying text by George Vasey, who knew Ben and his work well.

Cove’s work had much common ground with my own during the years we knew each other and we’d often talk about the shapes, forms, colours and importantly ideas around placement that we were working with. A crucial element of Ben’s work for ‘Flat Volume’ is his use of shadow, which aids by raising his imagined constructed forms seemingly up into 3-D illusionary space; alongside his bricolage approach to compositional placement.

George Vasey explains through several texts; ‘Freeloader’⁷⁰ – similarly to ‘Homunculus’ 2015 in ‘Flat Volume’ – is typical of his later practice...biomorphic objects that appear fragmented and hallucinatory...it appears animated and agitated.⁷¹ Within a shallow depth of field, Cove incorporates elements of acidic colour, trompe l’oeil marbling and architectural fascia.⁷² He continues: ‘In raking light, the underlayers of acrylic paint

peer through, evidencing the reworking over time. The paint application is varied; stippling, washes, and shading while other parts are matte and opaque. The light source is often multi-dimensional as is the perspective which veers between isometric and one-point perspective. Some forms are fleshed out while others are flattened. Ben was fond of the tensions that paint could create...Ben referred to his process of painting as a form of “looking out of the corner of my eye”. He rarely painted from sketches and preferred to work up a canvas intuitively, revising as he went.”⁷³

Cove wrote this statement for the John Moores 2016 catalogue which so fittingly speaks to ‘Flat Volume’, revisiting it now; ‘The paintings embrace multiple forms of representation, moving between mimesis and abstraction – **things to hold onto** amongst the uncertainties. A bank of images that includes architecture, furniture, artefacts, product design and depictions of the body serve as source material. These images are selected both for their formal interest and for the position of authority they come to occupy through shifting narratives and processes of association and assimilation. Little is translated directly from these images. Forms are evoked in order to render something that seems valid, dumb, familiar, discordant and alien.’⁷⁴

CHLOE LE TISSIER often returns to Guernsey, where she grew up and to which her paintings often refer back. Now a parent, she re-examines the familiar, with a nostalgic sense of the bittersweet passing of time and a growing sense of anxiety for the changing environment. Searching for order in chaos, it is an effort to capture the everyday, poignant and fleeting moment.

During our conversation, Le Tissier described the background to her work ‘Their Shoes’ 2022. ‘It poses questions about narrative, figuration and ambiguity; two children have their backs to a family of inanimate swans. The scene is at once static and moving, emotive and banal. This painting formed

68 Correspondence with Carl Rowe 10.10.24

69 Carl Rowe. The Crypt Gallery Norwich November 2024, Exhibition text.

70 ‘Freeloader’ by Ben Cove 2014 was shown in John Moore’s Painting Prize 2016

71 Essay by George Vasey to accompany Ben Cove in Space, a solo exhibition at Space Ilford, London, 2023-24, curated by Melanie Cove and Karen Davis.

72 Paintings that Do Things (On the Work of Ben Cove) Essay by George Vasey to accompany Modern Language, a solo exhibition at the Peter von Kant Gallery, London, 2015

73 <https://georgevasey.com/writing/ben-cove-in-space/>

74 Ben Cove text from John Moore’s Painting Prize 2016 Catalogue. Selectors were artists Gillian Carnegie, Ansel Krut, Phoebe Unwin and Ding Yi, and the author and freelance curator Rev’d Dr Richard Henry Davey

part of a series of works created during and in the years following the pandemic. As we returned to communal spaces and external interactions...The moment that is captured in 'Their Shoes' was a tantrum without much cause or reasoning. This moment feels ordinary but dramatic, still and moving. The children stood in defiance, seeming to turn their back on reality. All that mattered in that moment was their world, their needs in their reality."⁷⁵

It is the compositional qualities that Le Tissier employs that so fittingly position it within 'Flat Volume' and 'Placement of Parts' in particular. The museum case speaks of a semi-recognisable scene and objects, yet it is the angles of the disappearing glass case that equally confuse. The double swan – or two swans – become objects similar to the

child figures with Le Tissier's daughter's half reflection. The forms become conjoined in their placement, in this enduring moment. Only vital visual information has remained, highlighting the particular objects that are creating a relationship with one another.

Le Tissier explains; "I was drawn to the artificial elements of this scene; the way the museum lighting was refracted and reflected from this glass vitrine. I considered how a vitrine can be both a mode of captivity and protection, its purpose to display and preserve the object, to keep it in an artificial construction. The painting mirrors this but what it captures and preserves is an idea. The paint further refracts the scene. Purposefully small in scale, 'Their Shoes' is about the fragmented connection we have with our surroundings and environment."⁷⁶

TWO

OBJECT(NESS)/FORM:

DESIRE FOR 'SOLID' FORMS – WITHIN THE PICTURE PLANE – ALONGSIDE A PULL TO UNUSUAL STRUCTURES

What enables the understanding of objects or a more 'solid' form within paintings, as well as light seemingly bouncing on the surface? Shadows and their variety play a key role.

In 'The Visual World of Shadows', Roberto Casati and Patrick Cavanagh examine how the perception of shadows, as studied by vision scientists and visual artists, reveals the inner workings of the visual system. Stating that 'shadows are at once a massive problem for vision – which must distinguish themselves from objects or material features of objects – and a resource, signalling the presence, location, shape, and size of objects.'⁷⁷

This named 'problem' for vision becomes a toy of sorts for painters and a tool to add our own twist on things, either subversively, playfully, or even by 'deleting' entirely – adding further complexities.

According to ancient legend, Dibutades, a maid from Corinth in Greece, was about to see her boyfriend sent away from the city on military service. As the daughter of a potter, she devised an inventive way of making a portrait to remember him by: she positioned a light to cast his shadow against a wall behind him, tracing the outline of that shadow in the plaster. Her father then transformed his painted silhouette into the first relief sculpture by daubing clay within

⁷⁵ Interview with Chloe Le Tissier 11.11.24

⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁷ In *The Visual World of Shadows*, Roberto Casati and Patrick Cavanagh, 2023 Publisher: The MIT Press Roberto Casati is Director of the Jean Nicod Institute and Professor at EHESS (School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences) in Paris. He is coauthor of *The Visual World of Shadows*, *Parts and Places*, and *Holes and Other Superficialities* (all MIT Press). Patrick Cavanagh is a Senior Research Fellow at Glendon College of York University, Toronto, and Research Professor at Dartmouth College.

the silhouette.⁷⁸ This legend emphasises the importance of shadows in visual art, something which is not always appreciated by the viewer, as it is generally a given fact. Silhouette making and 'shadow play' were commonplace activities throughout history, as documented in paintings such as Lovis Corinth's (1858–1925), *Shadow Play* (1891).⁷⁹

Over the centuries, different types of shadow have been classified and named; two broad definitions are: 'simple shadows resulting from an object's three-dimensional form which fall on itself, and 'cast shadows', which are the shadows of objects falling on another object or surface. Shadows of both types were shown in paintings long before the Renaissance but it was not until the drive towards vivid realism in the early Renaissance that careful attention was paid to shadows of various types. In general, personally, I have a preference for a confusing shadow or an inconsistent one, at least.

If you paint the stem of a tree with uniform lightness and chroma it will inevitably appear to be a flat surface; put even the simplest highlights and shadows in and it will immediately be perceived as being cylindrical in form. Hence painters, and visual artists, have to be knowingly intentional of what type of reading they wish to produce.

'Flat Volume' artists are not concerned with mimesis of reality – in fact, I am anti realism, photorealism or hyperrealism in contemporary painting; this next selection of artists use shadows as a tool in their moulding of forms in differing ways.

I don't believe shadows are the main focus for any of these artists, merely a critical tool which advances their ability to visually communicate the personal idiosyncrasies which they have built up within their practice. It is this tool, combined with their pull to unusual structures, which makes their work so uniquely theirs.

NEIL GALL's work, including his 'Flat Volume' piece, 'Candidate' 2022 is masterly playful. He constructs maquettes for both his paintings and drawings. The maquettes also

continue to have their own cultural life, being independent yet interrelated art works, after being the painting's muse(s).

Gall defamiliarises the banal objects in his paintings by fragmenting them, creating luscious surfaces and voluptuous volumes of these still life paintings. He explores the tension between structure and spontaneity, known for his precision and attention to detail...while offering a contemporary reflection on transition, time and the balance of the human experience.⁸⁰ Like Nash, Barlow and many of the exhibiting artists, Gall finds beauty or visual interest in objects like; 'manufactured products and found object; such as wire baskets, cardboard packaging, paper towel tubes, plastic toys and colourful ribbons. He invests the 'unmonumental' objects in his work with the uncanny, with an otherworldliness that elevates them to a level of sophistication'.⁸¹

In a conversation text between Gall and Jon Wood⁸² they refer to Gall as a 'painter-sculptor'. Gall explains "There are times when one might characterise my sculpture as 'props' or 'models' for the paintings, but I feel I am giving the two areas equal weight in my practice and it's quite exciting." Gall continues "When I first started to use sculpture as props for paintings it seemed like a good way to generate images other than coming up with an idea and trying to sketch it...a way to play with form, but always with a view that it might be transferrable to a flat surface. I have said in the past only half-jokingly how I prefer sculpture in reproduction in a book or a magazine...a real window into my painter's mentality...The forms I used then – and now also – tend to be things I pick up on walks and are either left as they are or are slightly or substantially altered. The altering will involve a gesture that might involve cutting or wrapping or folding or any number of things that one might call a cultural action....They are then 'assembled in groups'. It is the same with the painting, in a sense...'something' made quickly, a roughly made model, which is then laboured over with oil paint in order to depict it."

78 As seen in works such as Eduard Daege 'The invention of Painting' 1832. National Galerie, Berlin.

79 A History of the shadow. Victor I. Stoichita. Reaction Books 1999.

80 <https://www.thisisprimary.com/neilgall>

81 <https://www.davidnolangallery.com/exhibitions/neil-gall-the-great-constructor> 2010

82 <https://www.holtermannfineart.com/exhibitions/2024/5/22/neil-gall-painting-and-plinths> 2024

LESLEY BUNCH's 'Shadow Sculpture 6' 2020 is part of an ongoing series; about which Hettie Judah writes: 'they have an uncanny vibrancy and dimensionality. The colours shimmer, apparently alive with light. They are, superficially, abstract – there is no easy to discern 'thing' here, nothing evidently represented. Yet the language of light Bunch employs, with its glimmers, reflections, and shadows, gives the impression of a physical object – something nebulous, translucent, globular, perhaps even iridescent, but a thing, nevertheless. And indeed, there are physical objects linked to each of Bunch's paintings, but they have endured multiple levels of translation and transformation.'⁸³

In 2014, during a year-long residency at Wimbledon College of Arts, Bunch put a call out for what she describes as 'persistent' objects – things the owners had 'invested emotion in'. After a long conversation with each lender, she composed a shadow thrown by the object that in some way interpreted its emotional resonance. Transparent or translucent objects were favoured, particularly those that carried colour, allowing the light to penetrate and dapple, and for the artist to play with colour and pattern.

Earlier, in 2008 she made a monochrome, 2D series of shadow paintings after a close reading of Jean Baudrillard's essay 'A marginal System: Collecting' (1968). "It was in that bubble when everyone was obsessed with collecting things," she says, "I was interested in presenting something as a collection that wasn't physically collectable." Her shadows are presented as lit and luminous physical objects.

Her approach is one of rigorous ambiguity, the work sitting silently somewhere between the real and illusory, the figurative and abstract, the sophisticated and primitive, volume and flatness, presence and absence.

PHYLLIDA BARLOW (1944-2023) 'untitled: hollow' 2022 (acrylic on paper) has been generously lent by her gallery Hauser & Wirth. It is notably a late painting and has a correlating large sculptural work of the same title, shown in the 2024 exhibition 'unscripted' at Hauser & Wirth Somerset, curated by Frances Morris. The large

sculptural work – 'untitled: hollow' 2022 was positioned within the opening room of the posthumous exhibition and was one of the artist's last works, which were 'part of a continuous investigation of the language and possibilities of sculpture, which emerged as Barlow found her voice as a student through exploring the legacy of British and European post-war sculpture.' In this exhibition there was also a well populated maquette table in which sat a small maquette of a similar shape – a mini hollow.

Phyllida Barlow has described her painted "colour drawings" as 'bad copies': rough approximations of things she has seen. In these works, she takes forms and objects from the real world and reconfigures them in line with her own sculptural concerns. Throughout her career, Barlow maintained a practice of drawing, which runs alongside and informs all aspects of her three-dimensional work. Barlow's first and last group of paintings on canvas were also on display at 'unscripted'. Small-scale and captivating, the painterly experiments were part of a move to larger-scale canvases that were to be debuted in this very exhibition.

In many of the acrylic works Barlow hovers between two and three dimensions, treating the space of the page at once as a solid thing and as an environment for objects by modelling it with light and shade. They have the flavour of cityscapes by the early-twentieth century metaphysical painter Giorgio de Chirico, whose squares and walkways, populated only by objects, are moody, dream-like and full of deep, dark shadows. They appear as haunting mental landscapes in which each event is heightened and charged.

'untitled: hollow' 2022 is simultaneously simple and complex. We are left with open-ended questions, which are actually ambiguously satisfying. For instance, questioning whether part of the form is a shadow or part of the 'object', is the most tantalising. We are given a real horizon, placing the object into a space, with an unknown scale. The clearly defined 'form' of the painting version of 'untitled: hollow' seen in 'Flat Volume', rises upwards with a tip of orange pointing to the sky while

83 <https://www.contemporarybritishpainting.com/emotional-spectres-lesley-bunchs-abstracted-objects/> Emotional Spectres: Lesley Bunch's Abstracted Objects. An essay by Hettie Judah (writer and art critic) about the work of Lesley Bunch, the winner of the CBP Prize 2022

almost falling behind it are the more solidified deep blue and pink blocks. This potential shadow flips when viewing the piece, making us question whether or not it is also solid and is part of the 'real form'. It is this confusion of form and 'stand up shadows' that make them so beguiling; a reoccurring characteristic of her drawings – of forms – as a whole.

In her work, 'TEST no 6', 2016 **KIRSTY HARRIS** depicts 'the most iconic man-made event that might take place in a landscape: the detonation of the atomic bomb.'⁸⁴

Harris' mushroom clouds are of course politically weighty and full of anxiety for the past and future intertwined yet she manages to make them objects of beauty in the same breath – they pack many dualities in these seemingly simple and calm paintings. The mushrooms' clouds become physical, voluminous, palpable 'beings' and through their colouration, we then explore their toxicity, with repulsion and fear.

Harris says 'these paintings on linen, depicting nuclear tests, are vast and confrontational. Moments of manufactured violence radically disrupt the desert landscape.' She continues, 'I am interested in the way these events from history disrupt and scar those barren landscapes. These swirling, bubbling apparitions are like curses or spells that we've cast on ourselves, so violent... We all know that beauty doesn't have a moral duty to be inherently good. It's something I think about, the push and pull of awe.'

The tests, made in the desert, are so fascinating, the photographs are very rich, colourful, and vivid, due to the way the light refracts and the type of film used. These practice runs at annihilation are so beautiful – it's unreal. It's dark.'⁸⁵ The way Harris visually and viscerally describes the form of the mushroom clouds and the surrounding impacted landscape is through that of physical volume of form.

The size of Harris's paintings often relate directly to the detonation. In this painting each square inch of linen represents 1000 tons of TNT – which in turn is the unit of

measurement the military use to signify the yield of the explosion.⁸⁶

Harris forces us to confront the reality in that gap in art because the beauty she extracts from brutality is both beguiling and unbelievable. It leaves us with the sense that there must be something behind this image of a cloud of smoke⁸⁷ and matter; but it is the articulation of form that draws us in.

DAMIEN MEADE is known for his paintings which are the culmination of a layered studio-based process. As seen in 'untitled' 2025 which he made for 'Flat Volume', he makes forms from clay and other materials and uses them as props for his paintings. The final works are often paintings of photographs of sculptures or drawings. His work shifts between the genres of still life, portraiture, landscape and abstraction. An interest in the animate and inanimate runs throughout his work, as does a curiosity with the uneasy relationship between objects and desire.⁸⁸

Due to his process, it is hard to pin down his paintings, as they both confuse and delight us; they are paintings of sculptures, making sculpture, or the wet clay maquettes at least, vital to his paintings. The wetness and tonal colours of the clay seduce us and we are fascinated as to how it can be painted; such a thing, with the wet paint seemingly remaining so. Within the clay you can see it has been kneaded by hand and the touch of the hand importantly remains.

Davide Ferri also describes the temporary feeling the sculptures have between paintings; the clay models are never fired so that each object can become something else. 'Talking about Meade's work means dwelling on something that no longer exists, or that ceased to exist before the painting began: it is only thanks to a series of photographic shots that the object was able to become the subject of the painting.'

'Meade's paintings seem to summarise aspects that are not fully assimilable and sometimes contradictory: the coexistence of the different languages of painting, sculpture and photography; a painting that continually evokes the ephemeral materiality

84 Xavier Ellis for 'Beyond the Gaze: Reclaiming the Landscape' Saatchi exhibition 2023.

85 Contemporary British Painting Artist of the month article October 2024

86 Correspondence with Kirsty Harris 15 March 2025

87 'Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb' Kirsty Harris An essay by Dr. Daniel Barnes 2015

88 <https://shop.whitechapelgallery.org/products/damien-meade-untitled-wg-2-2015> To coincide with his work on display in The London Open 2015, the Whitechapel Gallery's triennial

of sculpture. His paintings exist in the balance between two materialities – that of the picture as an object and that of the thing represented – which recall and re-launch each other.⁸⁹

REBECCA FOSTER-CLARKE explains that she ‘explores and paints the disconcerted nature of being a young woman’. The ‘characters’ are intertwined in a tragicomedy narrative, where tongue-in-cheek humour and the ominous notion of the uncanny merge. The bright colour palette and near-feverish realism transcends to create an unsettling dreamlike world.⁹⁰ Foster-Clarke’s works often depict women, insects, animals and still life scenes.⁹¹

It is these still-life scenes that are drawn into the curation of ‘Flat Volume’. Foster-Clarke’s imagination is curious and she melds worlds together with her appropriation of object and imagery. There seems a need to unnerve us from our slumber and show us to re-look at our material world- through the use of beetles on green birthday cake (‘Lead Balloon’ 2022), rabbit foot bottle opener (‘Hit-or-Miss’ 2023) and her ‘Flat Volume’ work ‘Eye Candy’ 2024 depicting glass eyes, oddly three of them in a vintage case.

Clearly Foster-Clarke has a passion for objects and using them to convey both hidden and explicit meaning; many of the objects read not from the contemporary vernacular, more a combination of charity shops and art history – reminiscent of Joseph Cornell’s interest in objects, yet Foster-Clarke’s work takes a different form, but similarly relates to iconography.

STEVIE DIX’s paintings seem to hold hidden personal meanings within her selection of objects as image and as symbol. It is this rich variety and the placement of her growing iconography, that embeds her usage of objects, leading to a heightened desire for and growing awe of the original item.

Each panel of her paintings weaves into a larger narrative, evoking a graphic novel

while drawing inspiration from geometry and anatomy. The juxtaposition of precise architectural lines with fluid, organic forms reflects Dix’s aim to create a dialogue between them, where each element speaks to the other.⁹²

Dix’s – stacked together – paintings are heavy and thick with paint and beeswax, composed in a personal language where figures and symbols are metaphors for intimate feelings and the world around us. Her interest in the cold and hard-edged character of urban living, contrasted with an investigation into the legacy of craftsmanship and artisanal practice in post-war Belgium. The darkness of these themes, bringing to mind the ominous and alluring works of Belgian Surrealists such as René Magritte, Rachel Baes or Jane Graverol, is countered by references to an extensive catalogue of glazed ceramic door handles, a typical decorative feature of Modernist houses built during the ‘50s and ‘60s in Belgium.⁹³

The duality of these objects – graphic compositions of line, intensity and colour reduced to a utilitarian ornament encased in a hard metal shell – is echoed in the artist’s own hand-made frames, an enclosure and delimiting of space.

With chosen icons as diverse as MargielaTabi Toe boots, decorative security grills and rebellious, protruding tongues, the thick and richly mottled canvases of Dix equally point to a coming-of-age world reflected through the darker years of maturity.⁹⁴ Her abstracted and eidetic vignettes speak to a confluence of memory with the subconscious, the mundane with the fantastical, and capture the intensities of our daily lives, laced with the fleeting, and at times longing desire to escape.⁹⁵

Object as symbol.

89 Davide Ferri, 2018. Davide Ferri is an Italian writer and curator based in Rome. This is a translation of an original Italian text produced to accompany Damien Meade’s solo exhibition at CAR DRDE Gallery, Bologna, in September 2018.

90 Correspondence 16/12/24

91 <https://mooseyart.co.uk/collections/rebecca-foster-clarke>

92 Carlier Gebauer gallery Madrid Solo exhibition Oct – Dec 2024

93 Hannah Barry Gallery Peckham. PRESS RELEASE, Stevie Dix ‘Magnesium’ 2 October – 6 November 2021

94 Hannah Barry Gallery Peckham PRESS RELEASE. Spring without End. 23 February – 15 April 2023. Stevie Dix, Danny Fox, Norman Hyams

95 Hannah Barry Stevie Dix Biography text sent from Stevie to Sarah Longworth-West 11.12.24 and accessible on the gallery site

CELIA HEMPTON works in specific series, including her 'Flat Volume' work, 'Self portrait, 15th October 2019' 2019 which come from her vaginal self-portraits. Other series are of her studio nudes, Chat Random series and paintings made live in situ on building sites. 'Using a colour palette bridging neons, deep brown and blues, Hempton's work uses portraiture to address feelings of discomfort and confrontation.'⁹⁶

The vagina self-portraits are all close-up and on intimate scale canvases. Hempton's use of brushwork is discernibly different between her differing subject series. Within this abstracted self-portrait series, she used smooth, visceral, thin layers of paint in sumptuous, mostly single monotone colours. I enjoy how she is able to hone in on areas of the body and readily objectify them throughout the studious use of colour and form; to re-engage us in the body as form. Hempton has said she is 'interested in empathising rather than objectifying' as a way to connect, to herself and to the audience. And for great immediacy too - I think.

When making these works, she uses a mirror, so to my mind, one could consider the mirror as a screen, through which she is reinterpreting the world, obviously using a reverse view – as a mirror operates – making the painting a distilled version and therefore the reality is not the main urgency. As well as bringing up discussions of desire and pleasure, the work, to me, allows us to reflect on form with colour.

Hempton explains, 'The self-portraits came about from my earlier nude series. I don't know why I didn't make them sooner, because it now seems really obvious. I think initially it seemed clichéd or trite. I probably had to make the nudes first and come around to it from that direction. Looking at myself in this way was a bit like a diary. They were like snapshots of how I might feel in any given moment versus what I could see. You have to get a mirror to really look properly, and it's quite uncomfortable to crouch over while making a painting. But the paintings have a different kind of power from other paintings of vaginas I've made because I can get as close as I want.

Sometimes I think they look like eyes or mouths. When you isolate body parts they almost become autonomous beings.'

She continues, 'An idea that's inherent in all of my paintings is: When does looking become an act of trespass? For what period of time are you allowed to look at something, and how does looking at something for a long time change the experience.'⁹⁷

LORNA ROBERTSON's 'Flat Volume' painting 'Old friends' 2025 is one of her 'object' based works, as opposed to her other stream of practice – how I see it – which incorporates clearly defined figures; she displays these interwoven in her exhibitions. The central recognisable figures of 'Old friends' – vases and jugs – stand tall, proud and ready to be held, yet simultaneously recede into ungraspable territory; imbued with memory and longing.

Robertson explains "My paintings sit somewhere between abstraction and figuration, a tangled game of hide-and-seek that play with the visibility and readability of an image. I often paint to find out what to paint, creating harmonies and tensions through placement of shape, specificity of colour – the process itself becoming an act of revealing".⁹⁸

The work reveals an intuitive approach to Robertson's painterly language: with a freedom of mark making rooted in improvisation playing on memory and layers of time. It reaches beyond representation through intimations of rhythm and harmony.⁹⁹

Robertson elaborate, "I like that paintings are silent and they have no beginnings or ends, works or certainties and they are open ended. Open ended to be viewed and interpreted in their own way. I'll usually begin a painting with a shape or a pattern. And then I'll attach things onto these shapes and patterns; fragments and memories. Perhaps a dress that my mother handmade and I wore when I was a child or a situation from the past, revisited and reinvented..."¹⁰⁰ Familiar objects hold the key to Robertson's practice and visual curiosities.

⁹⁶ <https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/25213-personal-private-public/> New York 2019

⁹⁷ Bomb magazine interview by Will Fenstermaker Power Dynamics: Celia Hempton Interview Painting psychological modes of looking. OCTOBER 8, 2020

⁹⁸ <https://www.inglebygallery.com/artists/260-lorna-robertson/overview/>

⁹⁹ Exhibition at Alison Jacques gallery LORNA ROBERTSON 28 June – 3 August 2024

¹⁰⁰ Spoken text extract, video of Lorna Robertson for 'Instalments' Ingleby Gallery, Scotland. <https://www.inglebygallery.com/video/30/>

THREE

RELIEF – CONCAVE/CONVEX –
THE MELDING BOUNDARIES OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

Many of the 'Flat Volume' artists are interested in painting in its loosest forms – meaning we enjoy and can view other disciplines within painting's discourse – i.e. fleshing out into sculptural forms and mutating into digital works or then falling back into painting. It is reassuring that the artists who are usually put under another discipline title, are pleased to be discussed in this light.

Personally, I enjoy the playfulness of framing and reframing practices within the realm of Painting and within this "wild nest"¹⁰¹. I very mildly hint at it in my practice, turning dried gesso paint mass, which is sculptural in form, into intentional additions which I call 'Remnants' atop the paintings, as part of the compositional whole.

We, of course, have the texts of Rosalind Krauss¹⁰²; David Joselit¹⁰³; Isabella Graw¹⁰⁴; Mark Titmarsh¹⁰⁵ to thank, which have enlightened and enormously impacted upon artists' ongoing dialogues, and teachings. In addition to setting out this subject, for artists to engage with it – either lightly, fully or simply being aware of – has ultimately framed conversations about Painting. It is evident in the looseness of boundaries, here in 'Flat Volume'; allowing us to open up a more layered, multi- faceted conversation.

'Flat Volume' takes a delicate step into the relief world, yet it is clearly an important one to note.

Mark Titmarsh on 'Expanded Painting': 'Ultimately, it involves a radical reconfiguring of the presence of the painted images and the object-based nature of painting' and vice versa.....It invokes Painting in a state of transition, a practice being reinvented and articulated with broadening horizons. The

possibilities for Painting are no longer at an end, but are suddenly wide open again. Expanded Painting exists in just such a relationship or FreePlay with Painting, it is connected by a certain family resemblance, there is a series of connections and disconnections, that relate it to Painting and at the same time can make its definitive connection seem tenuous.¹⁰⁶

It is these overlapping 'families' of interests and concerns, especially relating to objects and forms, that are so fittingly included in the conversation about what 'Flat Volume' is and these artists' works.

JENNIFER CAROLINE CAMPBELL's work is full of duality and complexity. It is this richness that gives us such a diverse way into her practices which seem to consider, at every turn, the world of 'things'; the world we live in and how we navigate these and could we perhaps be more aware...? That is one of the many reasons she has two works in 'Flat Volume'; as both 'types' of work fit, in differing ways. These are, 'Magnetic earrings' 2016 – 2021, a intimate relief work in which the placement of these handmade objects are delicately adhered; and 'Rachel of Syrup Goes Gathering' 2024, a pictorial relief painting of a story-telling hyperactive wasp.

Campbell explains during our conversation, 'I have a bag of mixed fragments. Unmethodically and with obsessive focus, I choose fragments and cultivate the combinations. Navigating without a map, textures and stories build up like mineral crystals. The fragments bundle and snowball into multicoloured slices, oscillating shiftily between flat picture and lumpy thing. This process is both childish play and serious questioning. It is honed in order to expose

101 Referring back to Paul Nash's painting 'The nest of wild stones' 1937 Arts Council collection, South Bank Centre London.

102 Sculpture in the Expanded Field. Rosalind Krauss. October Journal. 1979

103 David Joselit, 'Painting Beside Itself' October 130 (Fall 2009): 125

104 Thinking through Painting. Reflexivity and Agency beyond the canvas. Sternberg Press . Eds Isabella Graw, Daniel Birnbaum, Nikolaus Hirsch 2012. And Painting Beyond Itself. The medium in the Post-medium Condition. Edited by Isabella Graw and Ewa Lajer-Burchard. Sternberg Press. 2016.

105 Expanded Painting: Ontological Aesthetics and the Essence of Colour. 2017 Mark Titmarsh

106 ibid Page 13, 52 and 62

the unseen, shape new thoughts and inhabit multiple characters.'

Campbell's paintings stem from an ongoing practice of drawing, focusing on questioning and reflecting on cultural ideas around identity. The choice of material is important in Campbell's work – she employs different, non-standard materials such as plasticine, foam, discarded cardboard and so on; ephemeral, precarious materials that tell their own stories. She's keen to distance herself from traditional sculptor's materials such as marble, preferring instead to imbue her work with the juxtaposition that found materials afford her.

Campbell's fascination is the transformation of the materials and objects. She says 'Obviously I use quite cheap materials and I put this surface change on where I manipulate the shape of it, almost like dressing them up or rearranging them. Like glamour, it is this surface thing that you can borrow but you can never have permanently.'

During our correspondence, **IAN HARTSHORNE** described his practice and his 'Flat Volume' work 'The indifference of you' 2017. His paintings reveal imaginary constructed interiors with views ranging from partially enclosed spaces and neglected rooms that are occasionally stylish and (un) remarkably furnished. The use of colour is partially tasteless. The formal rules of perspective no longer apply, altering often and inexplicably. The painting plane is often split or has slipped. Objects appear upside down or occasionally float in organised space. Substance becomes insubstantial.¹⁰⁷

'The indifference of you' is an intimate, tenderly worked gem of a painting which reverberates and poses questions with his choice of pictorial devices. The acidic green wallpaper speaks of palimpsest and a feeling of his history of possibly knowing this space, coupled with the delicately striped teal blue familiar domestic curtains which are closed for the duality of keeping us in and safe and as a painting device. There are slippages of unease in the surrounds of the work which allow us to start to undermine what we first glimpse.

Yet despite these diverse pictorial elements, the overall impression of these interiors is not one of chaos, but of an underlying order, perhaps reflecting nature's profound tendency towards an organised and self-regulating equilibrium. The compositional dynamic of each painting is underpinned by a conscious desire to balance contrasting elements – saturated areas of flat colour with graduated areas, hard edges with soft dissolves, light with shade, clutter with calm.

He explained, that by placing the viewpoint firmly within each interior, these compositional dynamics are controlled, not only within the restricted space, but also outside that space to show what lies beyond. Sometimes, exterior views evoke an uncertain, bizarre or threatening world, and sometimes that view is closed off, as with 'The indifference of you'. This painting emphasises our natural inclination to retreat to the relative safety of whatever it is that we call home.

DESMOND BRETT's 'Flat Volume' work 'untitled' 2022, a vermillion, concave, mysteriously wall-hung form, could be read as an explosion out of several two-dimensional paintings by other artists in the exhibition. Wall as site for sculptural intrusion. He is 'interested in how a sculpture might be made as a discreet object or intervention that evades specific recognition and exists as an allusion to events, memories, gestures and things'.¹⁰⁸

Brett's practice explores the potential of materials through haptic processes that privilege modelling and forming. His sculptural output focuses on the physical properties of clay, plaster and other malleable materials in the creation of forms. The sculptures allude to the territories of post-war architecture, civic sculpture and non-human thresholds, whilst attempting to evade capture as recognisable things.¹⁰⁹

The way Brett works with plaster in terms of pigmentation is akin to my own developed method of pigmenting gesso at the chalk stage. Both media have the colour 'built in' and it is this pure colour that Brett applies to the forms he creates that, in my reading of them, make them bound within a painting discourse in duality of that of sculpture.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Ian Hartshorne over correspondence 9.12.24

¹⁰⁸ In conversation with Desmond Brett. Outpost Studios July 2024.

¹⁰⁹ <https://createdcontestedterritories.net/desmond-brett/>

The wall hung sculptures occupy the wall while also, at their side view, trick us to think they are falling in and through the white wall, dissecting the skin of the gallery.

In our conversations Brett explains, 'through a process of modelling with materials – clay, plaster and wax – making assemblages, I create forms that emerge as physical responses to speculative drawings. The general condition of making sculpture for me is one of improvisation and the 'informe' that isn't necessarily derived from observation.'

Brett's large forms sit in a deliberately awkward manner asking the viewer to manipulate their body to adequately behold them. The works jut into the space, filling the voids of the gallery. Each has a presence and holds its space as would another person, standing, leaning or sitting, commanding its own boundary, and asking you to consider your own.¹¹⁰

ALAENA TURNER's research focuses on the historicisation of abstract painting, through the themes of the archive and the re-make.¹¹¹

In our interview she described how she makes forms as paintings and paintings as forms; they are curious and always draw out conversations of process. For Turner 'The double meaning of the term 'painting', describing both the live action of mark-making and the resulting composition, enables her to use painting as a way to talk about productivity and performance.' She continued, 'Painting appeals to me because at the level of materials there is a historically established set of rules, based in chemistry, colour theory, and geometry which introduces conventions regarding how a painting should behave i.e. stability/permanence/optical effect. Through the use of material constraints I intend to question the logic of painting and make visible the labour which is ordinarily concealed. I pursue new systems for producing open compositions and introduce casual gestures.'

'Afterparty' 2022 her 'Flat Volume' work is from a series of works, 2022-present, that experiment with ways of casting a painting. Turner explained how this body of work

developed from a longstanding interest in the way that everyday materials perform and the use of constraints within a production process. 'In this particular example, paper folding techniques were used to create a one-off mould that sags and bulges under the weight of the casting material. A sense of the agency of materials is captured in the final image through allowing accidental details or 'flaws' to remain as essential elements of the composition. The painting documents the process of its construction and time of making, and might also be thought of as a kind of memento or relic for abstract gestural painting.'¹¹²

Overall, Turner's practice explores notions of the accidental and failure in relation to geometric abstract painting. She explains that 'I'm interested in creating systems of production which allow materials to perform in both a decorative and functional way. For instance, my previous body of work 'Secret Action Painting' explored the adhesive properties of oil-paint, whilst the series 'Everyday Paintings' used gloss as a means to repair a damaged surface. My practice is informed by the use of constraint systems in literature, such as the experimental writings of the Oulipo group.'¹¹³

SARAH RYDER's practice values time for experimentation and freedom to play without knowing the specific end result. Testing out concepts for her expanded paintings, often making 2D works that transform into 3D, underpinned by notions of imperfection, temporality, the structure of systems, and the balance of chaos and control; as seen in her 'Flat Volume' work, 'Imperceivable (until it isn't)' 2024. Her substrate choice of industrial foil is curiously endless and is a crucial element in how she individually orientates through painting into form and sometimes arrives at wall hung works or gigantic and intrusive sculptural work.

Conceptually, she notes 'I like how the foil, as material, makes the painting as much as the paint and my actions. It is easily portable. There are no hidden support structures dictating size, shape, and form. Instead, there are perpetual stories of movement and adaption, with momentary pauses of repose

110 Desmond Brett solo exhibition (Re) charge, (Ex) change exhibition text written and curated by East Gallery curator Claire Allerton. July 2024

111 <https://www.arts.ac.uk/colleges/central-saint-martins/people/alaena-turner>

112 Interview with Alaena Turner 30/11/24

113 Oulipo group was a loose gathering of French-speaking of writers and mathematicians who seek to create works using constrained writing techniques. Founded in 1960.

here and there.’¹¹⁴ Painting on the slippery and malleable foil surface she creates works that hover between, that may gently collapse over time or else resist a consistent, fixed form on each new presentation. Her intention is for the painting to resist a fixed, perfect viewpoint. They may pause briefly for an exhibition but even then, will change as the viewer moves around, their body bringing shadows, reflections, distortions, disruptions.¹¹⁵

Ryder explains, ‘I embrace continuous fluidity and the power of working with imperfection to keep my mind open to learning, thinking, and doing. Trusting this process to gradually permeate my whole self, enabling steady nourishment and the awesome feral energy of unexpected epiphany moments.’ She furthers this by saying that she works ‘instinctively and responsively with colour, marks, materials, and form; with music, ideas, full-body movement, and playful anarchy embedded in the making of my art. I enjoy the relationship between complexity and simplicity – the richness of multidimensionality in general, and specifically by mixing languages of painting, sculpture, and drawing. I’m interested in the expanded field and think about how my work interacts with people and places.’¹¹⁶

In **BEN WESTOBY**’s paintings – for example ‘Secrets’ 2023 – a repeated key geometric unit forms the foundation of a structured yet shifting visual field. These works follow a systematic approach, using themes of light and shadow to explore spatial relationships within a framework of formal constraints. Westoby elaborates on his painting processes in relation to the ideas around ‘Flat Volume’, “within my paintings, volume is essentially reduced to two states – foreground and background – represented by shaded cells. These two possibilities are further constrained by their organisation within a grid, which has a specific resolution – or number of spaces – where the cells can be placed. I think of this space as a framework for experimentation, where I can arrange volumes and shape the contours of a malleable terrain.”¹¹⁷

His paintings and sculptures are distinct from one another yet co-evolve; they are two identities mutating from one shared conceptual gene, fated to bifurcating paths.¹¹⁸

Westoby’s sculptural wall relief works – such as ‘Axolotl’ 2021 – are often constructed from arrangements of horizontal and vertical square beams of wood,¹¹⁹ which share the same “open-closed binary logic and compositional procedure” to his flat paintings but introduce three-dimensional variance.¹²⁰

Depending on one’s proximity, the work appears to expand or contract as the negative space between the beams becomes obstructed, revealing a new surface, geometries or ‘hidden’ symbols. Westoby explains, “I treat these newly revealed surfaces as a single plane, using them to create images through painted motifs or small apertures cut into the sides of the beams. I think of this as a visual paradox that emerges when this new geometry interacts with the closed volume’s solid surface.”¹²¹ Elaine ML Tam writes ‘the sculptures maintain aspects about them that are recessed or withdrawn, never do they give themselves up fully to sight.’

Titles are generally a way for Westoby to work against the formalism that he has developed within the working processes. ‘Axolotl’ was settled upon due to a combination of the tone of the paint and the ‘limb’ like protrusion at the top which reminded Westoby of the amphibian’s gills.

LYNDSEY GILMOUR is interested in painting as a distilled form of representation, imitation and ‘other’. She studies objects in relation to the home environment to create objective and subjective visual recordings of transitory figure-ground relationships. She uses the shadow to navigate space, between physical and representational being – from figuration towards abstraction.

A key quality of her work which stuns during an in-person viewing, is that it is almost flush to the wall – ultra flatness – of the

114 Correspondence and visit to Sarah Ryder’s Studio in Wales August 2024, talking about her work and processes July 2024 – March 2025

115 <https://exeterphoenix.org.uk/thirteen-artists-announced-for-exeter-contemporary-open-2022/>

116 <https://www.sarahryder.co.uk>

117 Correspondence from Ben Westoby, talking about his work and processes 20 Feb 2025

118 Excerpt of text by Elaine ML Tam April 2025

119 ‘Axolotl’ is constructed from walnut and birch

120 Correspondence from Ben Westoby, talking about his work and processes 20 Feb 2025

121 *ibid*

work, seemingly, miraculously floating on the wall. As oil paintings on steel, they draw on observation and memory to explore the relationship between objects and space. She paints on 1mm thick sheet steel to amplify the flatness of the painting's surface.

Gilmour explained to me that her work "attempts to acknowledge the 'ineluctable flatness' of painting and its wider histories, by working directly onto the wall and transportable support. She exaggerates surface while exploring each work's existence as a distinct object in space, its relationship with the wall and architectural surrounds."¹²²

In 'Ground Floor Right (end of part II)', 2025 Gilmour continues to explain how she explores a dialogue between drawing and painting, through the consideration of the home as a compression chamber for inhabitants' individual and shared dynamic. The work builds on ideas of psychological transitioning, through the flattening of form and figurative representation. It is an arranged selection of objects, interactions and activities that surround us and hold prominence through daily routine such as caring responsibilities, considering how a painting – like the television in 'Ground Floor Right (end of part II)' – is a system for converting visual imagery for display and consumption.

FOUR

ILLUSION OF FORM OR RELIEF

When thinking about and looking at all 38 artists' works and considering the four sub-sections of the curation that were forming 'Flat Volume' it was in this group of works that I could, potentially, cast myself within the pictorial space of their works. This feeling and concept is similar to projecting myself – in my mind's eye – into a film set or within a non-landscape or being there and seeing around the forms and objects themselves; even if the space or object are otherly – viewing them fully, in the round, or being enveloped by them.

There are rhythmic shapes and patterns made into forms, ambiguous landscapes, constructed by order and chaos, all underpinned by some level of desire to create illusion with depth and challenge, for a variety of messages, conversations and ambitions. It is this illusion that draws us in.

During our correspondence, 'Flat Volume' artist, Matthew Burrows wrote; 'Painting transforms what we see because we are always in a dynamic relationship between the surface and the imaginative experience

of space. It's not merely an illusion but an equivalent to our experience of reality. It must feel like the world more than it looks like it. Perhaps volume is then best understood as something felt, so much so that it can be grasped and held' ¹²³

PETER CHALMERS' work 'Raise the curtain again' 2022 is a linking work between the previous sub-section '*Relief (concave/convex)*' to this section '*Illusion of form or relief*' and hovers in between. The two conjoined surfaces of 'Raise the curtain again' are in fact flat; one clearly so and one optically opposed.

Chalmers' work is centred around a question of what and how to make and whether the act of making can in itself create meaning. Chalmers asks and reflects on "How can we approach making in the face of a threat from meaninglessness?" His 'Flat Volume' work was, in part, born out of an earlier body of work titled 'An Empirically Grey Area'¹²⁴ which used the reference of a book by Frederiksen¹²⁵ as a key point of research and making.

¹²² Correspondence from Lyndsey Gilmour, talking about her work and processes 20 March 2025

¹²³ Correspondence from Matthew Burrows to Sarah Longworth-West 3 Dec. 2024

¹²⁴ which was exhibited at the Look Again Project Space, Aberdeen, in 2019.

¹²⁵ Frederiksen, M.D., 2018. *An Anthropology of Nothing in Particular*. Alresford, Hampshire: Zero Books.

During our conversation, Chalmers explained “Image and narrative were largely removed in favour of anticipation and waiting, as I strived to make tangible this figurative grey area of meaning. The work sought to evoke the sense of suspense found in a glimpse over a dividing wall or the action that occurs just off stage. A reality that anticipates the possibility of meaning, but that must find a way of existing without any certainty of it.”¹²⁶

‘Raise the curtain again’ is notably a reworking of an earlier work, ‘Raise the curtain’ from 2016. The addition of the word ‘again’ to the original title seemed pertinent given that it is a reworking, but the title also seemed fitting because it was the first piece of work Chalmers exhibited post-Covid.¹²⁷

FAY NICOLSON explores the translation of images across painted, printed and drawn surfaces. Her visual and cultural references emerge from diverse histories across art, experimental music and theatre, and pedagogy, with a lateral focus on synesthetic approaches to making and thinking. The sensual qualities of artworks and how they may represent or relate to bodies is important to her. This begins with the formal and effective power of image and pattern but expands to considerations of the materiality and curation of artworks.¹²⁸

Nicholson’s piece ‘Tableau 1’ 2022 is from a body of work that unquestionably entangles methods and media with such delight; it is a literal dance between the handmade painting, photography, low-fi maquettes – where we can see the satisfying edge of cardboard – and its internal wiggle – and back out through photography and print. The process of this series is layered but it is unencumbered by it, as we focus on the back bending dancing figure and the impossible or perhaps static descent of the stairs. She is drawn to confusing forms.

This dexterity of methods rings true when looking at the wealth and variety of her practice. As Nicholson explains; “Alongside my studio-based practice I occasionally produce writing, sound, and performance using poetry, script or song as a format. Rhythm, prosody and lyricism emphasise the

sensual and physical aspects of language, where form and image catch. Texts explore the ways my personal experiences weave and clash with wider ideologies and cultural histories. Previous writing has explored: the mess of transplanted folk histories, pastoral aesthetics, and rural/suburban disaffection; how conflicting ideologies informing art education are embodied by students and tutors; reflections on the relentlessness of the art-world treadmill; as well as more academic explorations of embodied approaches to learning.”¹²⁹

In **LARRY ACHIAMPONG**’s piece – ‘Glyth: series 2 #3’ 2018, clearly the subject matter is key and I think this is brought home by his sophisticated use of collage. The formal use of flat shape and its ‘placement’ within the image is what enhances the original image overall to be so arresting; packing a punch. Note: Within ‘Flat Volume’ ‘Glyth: series 2 #3’ could equally have been placed into the compositional ‘Placement of Parts’ discussion of this text too.

Within the print series Glyth, family photos have been edited to blot out and replace the face of every black person. Replaced with a series of graphic black circles emblazoned with precise red lips, the artist conjures an aesthetic distilled from a mesh of childhood experiences; the artist’s direct familiarity with racism as a young child growing up in East London in the 1980s/90s both in school playgrounds and on the street and in everyday mundane icons and advertisements. There are many examples but the most prevalent in his childhood experience was Robertson’s Golliwog mascot, used to help market the jam that he encountered in supermarkets. Despite being directly inspired by the aggressively racist ‘Blackface’ minstrel shows that were popularised in the United States, the Robertson’s mascot was used as an official trademark for the company from 1910 until it was finally retired as late as 2002.¹³⁰

The prints have a knowing painterly compositional knowledge. Achiampong takes the majority of the compositional shaped values; the descending stairs – of course reminiscent of Duchamp’s ‘Nude descending the staircase’ 1912 – echoed by the

126 Interview with Peter Chalmers 18 Nov. 2024

127 Previously shown as part of the Royal Scottish Academy, Annual Exhibition 2022

128 Correspondence with Fay Nicholson October 2024

129 www.faynicolson.com

130 Copperfield Gallery 2024. Text about the Glyth series

sweetest Sunday best dresses which have a three-tiered form and voluminous puff sleeves. Then, adding the high contrast, his now iconic pure flat black circles, encompassing the two young girls' faces and identities with the addition of Dali-like red lips planted on top. This high contrast between the flat black and the dramatically voluminous figures and background is jarring and therefore heightens the racist connotations and demonstrates Achiampong's attraction to form within his imagery, as a true power to communicate.

MOHAMMED QASIM ASHFAQ's drawings including 'Pyramid III' 2024, explore the nature of shape, line and form in relation to his selected mark-making materials and bespoke process. In this dialogue between marker, mark and surface, each piece is brought to fruition using the simplest, most crucial configuration of detail. A sustained examination of his work quickly opens up formal questions about light and space within these forms. Ashfaq says "The straight line is one that travels on the same axis in space, without deviation. So a line drawn with a ruler depends on how true and straight the ruler is and secondly, how true the marking instrument is."¹³¹

Ashfaq's mesmerising pencil drawings of dark glossy orbs or triangles often combine to make complex forms. Crucially when the graphite catches the light, they are revealed to actually be millions of precise lines, collapsing to a point of origin. Although the works exude an anonymous, almost industrial feel, they are conceived by his hand and laboriously refined. The mirroring surfaces force the eye to recede, simultaneously revealing and obscuring contours and volume, challenging the reliability of the viewer's perspective. Ashfaq says "My work reflects that ambiguous spatial density that we are set within."¹³²

Ashfaq's work is an invitation to look at the world, to look again and look better. His visual language invokes the tessellation of Islamic ornament and mysticism sharpened with technological precision. It is a coinciding space, one of meditation and a slow but fierce propulsion to the future,

one where ideals of modernism and science fiction take hold. Shapes we consider stable collapse, reconstructed as a fluid relationship of sculptural energy.¹³³

There is something considered and sort of mystical about his instinctively drawn forms. He says he just knows when a shape is good. Ashfaq's love of geometry comes from his childhood as the son of an engineer in Dunfermline, "I used to get tested at school for spatial awareness. They did a general test and there was a section to do with shapes in space, which was closest and which was farthest away, and it was really easy," he says. "I'm not mathematical. I think maths and geometry are completely different. Geometry is about understanding space, and something in space..."¹³⁴

MATTHEW BURROWS' works are described as 'multifarious and richly referential in their various skeins, whorls, layers, and patterings. These subtle beguiling paintings are built up in layers and conjure up physical contours of landscape as well as ritual mappings, markings and moving through terrain physical and imaginary...themes of interconnectedness chime.'¹³⁵

Burrows' 'Flat Volume' work 'Sternō III' 2022 is rhythmic, clearly planned yet has a feeling of looseness to its core with the use of varying levels of opaqueness to the painted marks, which form the shapes and volumes that we bounce between. They are large works which envelop us in their folds. There is differing pictorial depth also; the majority being a shallow depth but, importantly, with 'Sternō III' there are semi receding fainter blue lines that pull us into a wider field of depth along with the over-layered burgundy dots which are pushed back and now float somewhere in the distance.

These paintings are reflective, thoughtful and slow to reveal complex structural spaces filled with marks, shapes and pigment. The thin washes of oil paint scrubbed and scratched into and across the surface creating strange half states where colours and images hover on the edge of description. Burrows creates an unusual softness across the hard or porous surfaces:

131 Correspondence from Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq with Sarah Longworth-West 1 Feb 2025

132 <https://themovingmuseum.com/artists/mohammed-qasim-ashfaq>

133 <https://www.artforum.com/events/mohammed-qasim-ashfaq-207421/>

134 New face of visual art: Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq Saturday December 31 2011, The Times

135 <https://matthewburrows.org/> Text by Louisa Buck

fast and slow, thick and thin, rough and smooth. He finds his reality in paradoxes and thresholds rather than objective certainties. For him the work of painting is in making us whole, with all our failings and idiosyncrasies. These paintings make themselves vulnerable; they display their faults and wounds without shame. They leave unmade their form and surface, finally asking for our participation in putting them and us together.¹³⁶

Burrows explains, 'Although my paintings look abstract, I think of them as paintings of a landscape. They're not paintings of a classic view; they are patterns in a way that take various ideas from nature.'¹³⁷

MICHELE FLETCHER's 'Better to Burn Out' 2022 was sensitively chosen by Fletcher for 'Flat Volume', as the exhibition is in October; the tones of 'Better to Burn Out' fit with the shifting autumnal days.

Fletcher's paintings are informed by the natural world. Relying on visual memory, they are more sensation than place: a process-led abstracted rumination on light, colour and form in a garden. Her paintings are a rhythmic, gestural and intuitive response to her immediate surroundings. The making of a garden, like a painting, involves an intervention with material – pulling, pushing, manipulating and composing. A reimagining of our relationship with the natural world, the work is rooted in both the tradition of landscape painting and the language of abstraction.¹³⁸

Fletcher works in series using the intimate relationship to her garden and allotment as the stimulus for the works. There are lithe, sinuous forms with wide, fluted and calligraphic brushstrokes, in tones ranging from the verdant to the down-right psychedelic. The shapes allude, by turns, to great density – a lush undergrowth – and to massive spaciousness or depth, as if they were emerging from a hidden core of brightness. We might think of algorithms, too, as we trace the trills and twists of Fletcher's process-led abstraction¹³⁹, and our current cultural vernacular.

Fletcher explained to me that she is originally from Canada and has been working with the natural world for so long that she has a vocabulary that she draws on subconsciously. She describes it as her muscle memory, having been immersed in plant culture from an early age. 'There's a real need to think about our connections to nature at the moment, because we're at a breaking point'. These paintings offer us the chance to sit with the intelligence of nature, and perhaps to become something new.

With a similar visual preoccupation to James Irwin and Yun Kyung Jeong, we can navigate the shapes, forms, rhythms and patterns to penetrate the shifting terrain of Michele Fletcher's version of unreal/reality, to grasp at our world and environment.

I had the pleasure of sharing a studio with **YUN KYUNG JEONG** at Slade School of Fine Art. We also shared a painstaking, yet enjoyable, dutifulness to our painting processes; which you can see she has clearly retained in her ongoing work. The way she continuously layers shapes, patterns of forms and creates a bountiful new land or mindscape is dazzling, always making anew with her regular wealth of visual vocabulary. The swirls and turns in which we are invited to enter are captivating, and it is our imagined entry of these places or spaces that capture our imaginations. The work becomes overlaid with seemingly incompatible contemporary fluorescent gestures which tip us off glance yet seemingly fit in harmoniously with the whole.

Jeong now lives in South Korea and has made 'Quotidian Fever-LD' 2025, a hanging canvas, specifically for 'Flat Volume'. It shows a continued engagement with her personal history and connection to London and the UK, which interplay with the visuals of her works.

Jeong finds a delicate balance between Eastern and Western artistic traditions by fusing East Asian ink with abstract expressionism from the West. She plays with perspective and exploits empty

136 <https://www.vigogallery.com/artists/33-matthew-burrows/overview/>

137 <https://www.ryezine.com/articles/matthewburrows>

138 <https://www.candidhouse.art/artists/michelefletcher>

139 Becoming Nature: On Michele Fletcher's Painting. Greg Thomas is a writer, artist and musician.

As a writer and editor he specialises in modern and contemporary art and literature.

space on the canvas to create complex visual language. Often without a pre-planned concept in mind, her works are a response to her immediate surroundings and happenings, which embody her own intimate emotions and experiences.¹⁴⁰

These newly formed landscapes act as 'a portal that confronts the reality. This flittering portal becomes lucid and overcomes the physical limitations to enable the encounter of the artist and the work. This reveals that Jeong, instead of stepping back to the fallen world, has begun to gaze at the phenomenon and found an opportunity for utterance. Thereby, the illusion is preserved and the present is condensed to its fullest.'¹⁴¹

During my conversation with **JAMES IRWIN** about the ideas surrounding 'Flat Volume' and Paul Nash as a centre point, he stated that he holds an affinity with how Nash used his contemporary tools to reshape and alter the English landscape. As I see it, Irwin is similarly reshaping his digital constructed landscape. In 'surfacecollider (Ghost in the Machine)' 2025, which has been made specifically for 'Flat Volume'. Irwin navigates us around the shapes and forms – with never-ending changing form and colouration – then suddenly, we are flicked out of a space we thought we had grasped to be placed outside of it, yet also in an external space which opens up the widening horizons...

Using synthetic digital sound and image Irwin draws attention to a vitalism inherent within digital media. He assembles new bodies from a combination of digital hardware, software and human wetware¹⁴², which emerge collectively through the computer screen as the audio-visual output of live code manipulated by user interaction. His work expresses a concern with closeted forms of subjectivity that start and end within the human body. Following a hunch that a form of technological consciousness already exists, he makes kin with the internet, smartphones

and computers, amongst other cyborg technologies.¹⁴³

Irwin further explains his connection to 'Flat Volume' and its painterly concepts, '...what I do – and how I make the work – operates according to cybernetic feedback loops between my body in meatspace¹⁴⁴ and digital sounds and images generated by the computer. This is where I see the overlap between the work that I make and painting. Both processes activate feedback loops between the human body, technologies and materials in ways that breathe life – and volume – into the artworks that emerge.'¹⁴⁵

BEN JAMIE's painting 'Overstory ii' 2024 is from a new body of work which concentrates on the form of large trees – an eternal subject matter – in the UK with a thickness to them, that relates to time and history, as well as childhood where we might wrap our arms around them in the woods. These are from similar landscapes to those that Paul Nash was so fascinated by and Jamie's discerning palette also speaks of Nash's works in the post-war era.

The paintings are simultaneously beautiful and unsettling, reflecting the duality of nature as both a nurturing and destructive force.¹⁴⁶ His use of paint with charcoal lines are sumptuous, layering colour upon colour until satisfied with the balance – a lengthy process. This produces, when viewed in person, a rich patina which reflects the passage of time and the accumulative effect of duration. Outside his studio are in fact London plane trees which had just been pollarded when I visited – forms that I enjoy but Jamie expressed how he prefers them natural/pre-pollarded¹⁴⁷ – which rings true when you follow his interest in nature.

Jamie notes about his use of charcoal "I feel this method of working allows me to work fairly intimately on large scale paintings. The breaking up of the space allows parts of the image to hover within the picture plane, and interact with similarly coloured areas. I

140 <http://www.galleryexit.com/jeong-yun-kyung.html>

141 Finger Spell: A letter from an unworn time. Graphite on Pink, Seoul, 2021. Min-ji Jeon http://yunkyungjeong.com/press/press_25.php

142 "Human wetware" a term that refers to the biological system, particularly the brain and nervous system, as a form of computer or computational system, analogous to hardware and software

143 <http://www.jamesirwin.net/about>

144 "Meatspace" – a term for the physical world, as opposed to cyberspace or a virtual environment.

145 Correspondence with James Irwin 23 Jan 25

146 Castor Gallery exhibition Ben Jamie: Realm 1 – 30 Sept 2023

147 Studio Visit with Ben Jamie, London October 2024

am very interested in optical illusions, and how perception is almost pieced together from what the eye has seen and what the brain thinks it has seen.”¹⁴⁸

‘Overstory ii’ 2024 is of the real world yet rendered flatly and almost translated into another alternative dreamlike place, reflective of Nash’s outlook on his British countryside.

This series of **CRAIG BARBER**’s paintings are developed through an interest in critiquing the structures that surround us in society. The works are informed by various sources that Barber is drawn to including sci-fi films, mainly from between the mid-1950s to late 1980s¹⁴⁹ which frequently pass commentary on contemporary society and political challenges. The sources of these films are used alongside found photographs from a similar era to inform the figures and ‘situations’ within the paintings.

Graphic, geometric shapes or forms float in the image. Conceptually, Barber described to me how he imagines and projects that ‘these shapes are analogous to societal structures, considering the way that civilisations build physical constructions

and social and political systems along with related figureheads’¹⁵⁰

Barber’s painting ‘A line as thin as a thread’ 2024 exemplifies his use of floating or hovering shapes, which lead to creating a tension between the acidic, seemingly often barren landscape to those inhabitants, whose scale, we can feel ourselves, is less significant. Barber explained ‘The figures often stand as if in stasis, which is in common with the other elements of the image.’ The way he has approached painting each single ‘element’ of his painting, brings us back to ‘Flat Volume’s’ keystone – Paul Nash – and his ‘arrangements’ in the surreal, possibly dystopian, landscapes, how each element highlights and awkwardly interacts by separation.

Within these paintings, an equivalent, unhinged narrative is delivered through the pictorial systems deployed and through the deconstruction and reconfiguration of the painting as object. Allowing the works to exist in a moment of tension, not quite constructed and not quite collapsing, with the use of shape or form as a key activator.

148 <https://www.newandlingwood.com/the-editorial/post/conversation-artist-ben-jamie> Conversation between Ben Jamie and Andy Wick 2023

149 For example – ‘This Island Earth’ 1955 directed by Joseph Newman (Based on Novel by Raymond F. Jones 1952) and ‘Soylent Green’ 1973 directed by Richard Fleischer and ‘Rollerblade’ 1986 Directed by Donald G. Jackson.

150 Interview with Craig Barber at Norwich University of the Arts on 31 Oct 24 by Sarah Longworth-West

PHYLLIDA BARLOW'S PAINTED 'COLOURED DRAWINGS'¹⁵¹ AND HER IMPACT ON 'FLAT VOLUME'

Phyllida Barlow taught many students over her long career. Some of the artists in 'Flat Volume' were amongst those she taught on the BA Fine Art course, as Professor, at the Slade School of Fine Art. Those on the MA, myself included, were sometimes lucky enough to sign up to an additional tutorial with her. The impact of her teaching is impossible to fully evaluate but can be felt in the discussions and attitude of her positive DIY culture: to push on and make, regardless of boundaries.

Over a career that spanned six decades, as a sculptor, Barlow took inspiration from her surroundings to create imposing installations that can be at once imposing and playful. Barlow continually invented forms stretching the limits of mass, volume and height as they block, straddle and balance, often precariously. The audience is challenged into a new relationship with the sculptural object, the gallery environment, linking to the world beyond.¹⁵²

Clearly, in examining her practice, the flow between form, drawing and paint is laid bare. Her approach to and development of the works she called 'coloured drawings', as an integral part of her practice, has steadily influenced many contemporary artists, across different media.

Barlow, like Paul Nash and many of the 'Flat Volume' artists, took inspiration from her immediate surroundings, whether it was the man-made environment of architectural structures such as pylons, skips and skeletal

structures or more natural softer forms like sacks or bundles. She was interested in appearance versus function...displacing, re-visualising objects, in rendering them useless, absurd...she – importantly to 'Flat Volume' – painted the surface of the sculptures, adding colour and texture.¹⁵³

Some imagery and objects have occurred repeatedly over the decades – heaped objects, stacked towers, placards and hoardings, amorphous shapes, folded shapes, enclosed spaces, broken things, ramps, fences, grids, barriers.¹⁵⁴ Barlow explained 'Forms come and go, then re-emerge years later: sometimes they are very similar to their precursors, sometimes they have evolved.'¹⁵⁵

Barlow said "Maybe the reason I have used painterly processes when drawing has been to avoid illustration and develop qualities of what a proposed sculpture might entail through the use of colour as much as line. Colour provides a kind of mass, which can be abstract as well as image."¹⁵⁶

There is a clear visual connection between Barlow's work and the structured forms she was drawn to, in relation to Nash's visual vocabulary. An example of this is in his 1928-9 works 'Nostalgia Landscape: St Pancras Station' and the following iteration, 'Northern Adventure'. Both of these paintings are located at the train station frontage however, it is a perhaps overlooked, temporary skeleton billboard hoarding structure which is the focus of the works.

151 "I have called these works made since 2001 'coloured drawings'". Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) page 34.

152 Press Release 'Phyllida Barlow unscripted' Hauser & Wirth Somerset 2024

153 Phyllida Barlow: Fifty Years of Drawings – 1963 to 2013 – published by Hauser & Wirth in association with JRP Ringier. 2014 Introduction by Sara Harrison page 8

154 Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) Phyllida Barlow in conversation with Sophie Raikes page 18

155 Phyllida Barlow: Fifty Years of Drawings – 1963 to 2013 – published by Hauser & Wirth in association with JRP Ringier. 2014 Introduction by Sara Harrison page 7

156 Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) Phyllida Barlow in conversation with Sophie Raikes page 29



Phyllida Barlow *untitled: 100 drawings* 2013 Acrylic on watercolour paper 100 drawings, each: 21 x 29.7 cm / 8 1/4 x 11 3/4 inches © Phyllida Barlow Estate Courtesy the Phyllida Barlow Estate and Hauser & Wirth Photo: Alex Delfanne.

In conversation at the Baltic¹⁵⁷, Barlow spoke about her growing attraction to drawing, "Since about 2001 drawing has become a very important part of how I make the sculptures. I began to photograph things out on the street. But the things I photographed I wanted as isolated objects, for them to be sculptures in the making. I then stopped taking photographs and instead made small impromptu drawings, in sketch books. These, combined with remembered images, objects, views and so on, became the resource for about sixty drawings, forming themselves into an archive of observed things." When her 'object' is shown in pure isolation, often the

shadow is clearly drawn in emphasising the angle of viewing and ultimately focusing attention on its status as a drawn image¹⁵⁸; which we see as a key engaging feature in her 'Flat Volume' work 'untitled: hollow' 2022.

She explained on another occasion: "It is like keeping in touch with a constant working archive of imagery that I want to record... Things are drawn, then they are often made small, and then things get sorted out to make them big... [I go] from sketch-books, through to bigger drawings and then bigger works and then back to drawing again."¹⁵⁹

157 Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art. The culmination of this body of 60 drawings resulted in works Barlow showed at; The Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead. Solo exhibition, titled *Peninsula*, curated by Pippa Coles at on show between 20 November 2004 and 17 April 2005. And Solo exhibition at: Bloomberg Space, London on show 29 January to 5 March 2005, with the programme curated by Sacha Craddock, Graham Gussin and Stephen Hepworth.

158 Phyllida Barlow: *Fifty Years of Drawings – 1963 to 2013* – published by Hauser & Wirth in association with JRP Ringier. 2014 page 8

159 Phyllida Barlow in conversation with Tamar Garb and Bryony Fer, 2011, UCL centre for the study of contemporary art, 17 October 2011.

Clearly her 'coloured drawing' is not a parallel or peripheral pursuit, but is at the very heart of Barlow's practice as a sculptor. It is one practice.¹⁶⁰ From her art-school days; she persisted with making drawings... as an act of rebellious 'retaliation' against received opinion at that time: they were a way of trialling new ideas and reaffirming her own particular vision.¹⁶¹

In a revealing conversation she explained how drawing increasingly became part of her daily practice and how these drawings became 'coloured – painted – drawings'. Hans Ulrich Obrist asked her how the pressure of time in her early career seemed to have 'produced this more direct language....' He noted, "There was less time. But it's interesting that part of this new velocity means that you also get away from the idea of drawing it all, and it becomes more about the use of colour. They're very painterly. Did you use acrylic?" Barlow, "Yes, these are all acrylic." Ulrich Obrist, "So that's the thing- the arrival of acrylic in the drawings. They're painted drawings." Barlow, "They are painted drawings, yes, and that's just stayed ever since"¹⁶²... as a method of working.

Barlow often went on to rework and refine individual forms in subsequent painted drawings in a process of mediation between objects in the real world, distilled forms from her drawings and memory, providing material for her sculptural work; for the duration of her artistic career.

In an interview for 'Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow' she explains 'They are not paintings. They retain something casual, on the margins and at the periphery of those (sculptural) works that demand a lot of (practical) organisation, which become more resolved and are more time consuming. These 'coloured drawings' come about in the same way as the smaller (sculptural)

works: quick, intimate, open to change and spontaneous decision, and irrational changes of mind and direction."¹⁶³ However, these painted drawings do even more than that: they define the space of the page in a very physical way.¹⁶⁴

After rediscovering paint in the late 1980's, Barlow had found that colour itself could be a practical material and started to use it in a physical way, becoming a defining aspect of her sculpture.¹⁶⁵ Her 'coloured drawings' are characterised by deliberate casual messiness: her specific, prolific yet softened use of colour is more or less a constant throughout. She explained that in her drawings paint allowed for "fuller, bolder, more generous gestures, a greater physicality, that brings them closer to sculpture."¹⁶⁶ Barlow noted of her palette that 'the colours from the 50s and early 60s (from her childhood) have always remained important... As well as colours that you see (now) on the urban street.'¹⁶⁷

Talking with 'Flat Volume' artists during the curating process we recognise her reflections and ethos on her 'can do' approach to practice and similarly to exhibiting. Barlow explained, "I'm very interested in that state of mind when you want to do something, but you actually don't know what to do. I think it's a very un-talked-about area of making art, this longing. 'Yes, I want this and I don't even know what to call it!' So I just remember pouring this paint onto that paper there, and then gradually introducing other colours in layers, and this semi-geometric **form emerged**, and then at one point saying stop. And I think knowing when to and when not to stop is still very difficult to decide. I don't know whether things are finished or not, but that, for me, is when this way of drawing is at its most exciting... This is where I'm still in a state of quandary about the work, even when I can't go on with it any further."¹⁶⁸

160 Phyllida Barlow: Fifty Years of Drawings – 1963 to 2013 – published by Hauser & Wirth in association with JRP Ringier. 2014 Introduction by Sara Harrison page 7

161 Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) page 12

162 Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist 2014. Phyllida Barlow collected lectures writings and interviews. Published by Hauser & Wirth 2021. Publisher Dr Michaela Unterdörfer, Editor Sara Harrison page 279

163 Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) page 34.

164 IBID page 11

165 Phyllida Barlow: Fifty Years of Drawings – 1963 to 2013 – published by Hauser & Wirth in association with JRP Ringier. 2014 Introduction by Sara Harrison page 7

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167 Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist 2014. Phyllida Barlow collected lectures writings and interviews. Published by Hauser & Wirth 2021. Publisher Dr Michaela Unterdörfer, Editor Sara Harrison page 279

168 Phyllida Barlow collected lectures writings and interviews. Published by Hauser & Wirth 2021. Publisher Dr Michaela Unterdörfer, Editor Sara Harrison Page 282



Installation view, 'Phyllida Barlow. tilt', Hauser & Wirth, New York NY, 2018 © Phyllida Barlow Estate. Courtesy the Phyllida Barlow Estate and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Genevieve Hanson.

A large portion of Barlow's sculptures from the last fifty years have been destroyed. The materials were either disposed of or recycled into new works. This decision was initially motivated by necessity, but over time this process of destruction became part of Barlow's questioning of sculpture's traditional values of permanence, durability, and longevity. What survives from the previous decades is a rich archive of drawings dating back to the 1960s. These provide the artist's own account of the missing sculptures. Moreover, they are an integral part of her artistic output: works in their own right.¹⁶⁹

Her posthumous exhibition 'Unscripted' was curated by Frances Morris at Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, in 2024-2025¹⁷⁰. In an accompanying video Morris notes, "These works bring to the forefront object/non-objects and in doing so enhance our attention upon the visual fundamentals but through slowed viewing, within the dynamic 'lived' and arresting moments

of the painting, which allows us to view and interrogate material culture and value systems; our relationship to them and ideally more consciously acknowledge them, however beguiling." She continues to ask, "Then, how do you break the static in two – dimensions...?" Barlow is "using shadows, and gesture, touch. She loved precarity, she loved imbalance". Morris refers to the sculpture 'Untitled: hollow' 2022 "how do you make something that's hollow out of solid planks?" and says of Barlow "she wanted to go behind it, take it apart, interrogate it and put it back together in a different way".¹⁷¹

End note: In 1974 Phyllida Barlow wrote this short text called 'My drawing'. "The marks on paper attempt to form themselves into makeable objects but they are objects which have no reality as regards technical problems and material.... The quickness with which an image can be formed through the unfolding of line and bright blocks of colour is an end in itself."¹⁷²

169 Phyllida Barlow: Fifty Years of Drawings – 1963 to 2013 – published by Hauser & Wirth in association with JRP Ringier. 2014 Introduction by Sara Harrison page 7

170 <https://www.hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/phyllida-barlow/>

171 *ibid*

172 First published in Edward Lucie-Smith, *British sculptures; attitudes to drawing* (Sunderland, Sunderland arts Centre, 1974) and also Phyllida Barlow collected lectures writings and interviews. Published by Hauser & Wirth 2021. Publisher Dr Michaela Unterdörfer, Editor Sara Harrison page 253

END NOTE

It was after extensive research that I approached A.P.T Gallery for 'Flat Volume's' first public viewing, for the following reasons:

A.P.T's respected reputation is for having well-chosen curated exhibitions alongside the aims and ethos of the Trust to support artists. Its history is of strong painting shows, artist-led projects and critical integrity. It is supportive of dialogue and integration in the immediate community with education as a priority, promoting connections with local under-represented and/or social groups in the area.

Its location and easy accessible spaces are also essential and appealing whilst being embedded within the A.P.T artistic community.

A.P.T's physical space was ideal for this exhibition – the 3 different size and scale spaces or 'zones' help the curation of the various sized works, aiding how we ideally want them to be viewed and to illustrate the complexities and dialogues between the works. The flexibility of the space, due to its size, is ideal for the symposium; being adjacent to and immersed in the works, rather than it taking place in a specific education space.

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Throughout the process of initiating the concept for 'Flat Volume', selecting and researching the artists involved, shaping this text through the writing and editing processes, digitally curating the installation, meeting or corresponding with the majority of the artists; I have inevitably developed as an artist, researcher and curator. It has impacted upon the way I view my own practice in terms of its key attributes and has allowed me to trace the roots and formative stabilisers which have grown throughout the practice to date.

Why does a painter spend the time and effort involved in such a large endeavour as 'Flat Volume' rather than putting all of their time into their studio practice? The reasons are many, yet the key ones for me to highlight at this juncture – written before the exhibition – boil down to that event. To see the works, all together in one exhibition! I anticipate the physical experience of seeing the works alongside one another and how they viscerally and visually have been living in my mind's eye for longer than I think I realise. It is an event that will allow others to make connections and share within the discussions, that I had with myself, and during this process, with the artists also – notably Nicholas Hatfull, during the development of articulating the ideas. A personal aim, in addition, is the exhibition and this publication to potentially act as an educational resource and a way for others, either interested in painting or the subjects discussed, to delve deeper or equally just to dip into. To find out about the specific works they are interested in, without leaving the exhibition just having an instagram handle. I hope that the ideas within 'Flat Volume' will have the potential to be embedded deeper within a discourse, amongst painters. Hence my inclusion of the later section in the publication titled 'Artists' Responses' which allows further insights into individuals artists' ideas surrounding volume in their practices and work.

Within each artist's practice in 'Flat Volume', we are reflecting the world and our internal and external environments through the use of form – real, constructed, imagined.

Something for us and the viewer to visually grab onto and stand, sit, be with, quietly in this unpredictable, fast-paced, screen-based environment of ours.



Plate 22

Lorna Robertson 'Old friends' 2025 oil paint on paper. 100 x 140 cm.



Plate 23

Jennifer Caroline Campbell 'Rachel of Syrup Goes Gathering' 2024-2025 Cardboard, balsa wood, neoprene, oil paint, marble dust, nail gems. 55 x 50 x 1.5 cm.



Plate 24

Ian Hartshorne 'The indifference of you' 2017 Oil on Canvas. 46 x 38 cm.



Plate 25

Desmond Brett 'untitled' 2022 Cast pigmented fibreglass. 206 x 145 x 63 cm.



Plate 26

Alaena Turner 'Afterparty' 2022 Acrylic and jesmonite on wood. 30 x 22 x 5 cm.



Plate 27

Jennifer Caroline Campbell 'Magnetic earrings' 2016 – 2021 Acrylic paint, foam, stage tape, bondaweb, emulsion, polymorph plastic, wire, pin, cardboard, gold leaf. 13 x 11 x 4 cm.



Plate 28

Sarah Ryder 'Imperceivable (until it isn't)' 2024 Acrylic paint, PVA, aluminium foil, brass hooks.
200 x 240 x 40 cm.

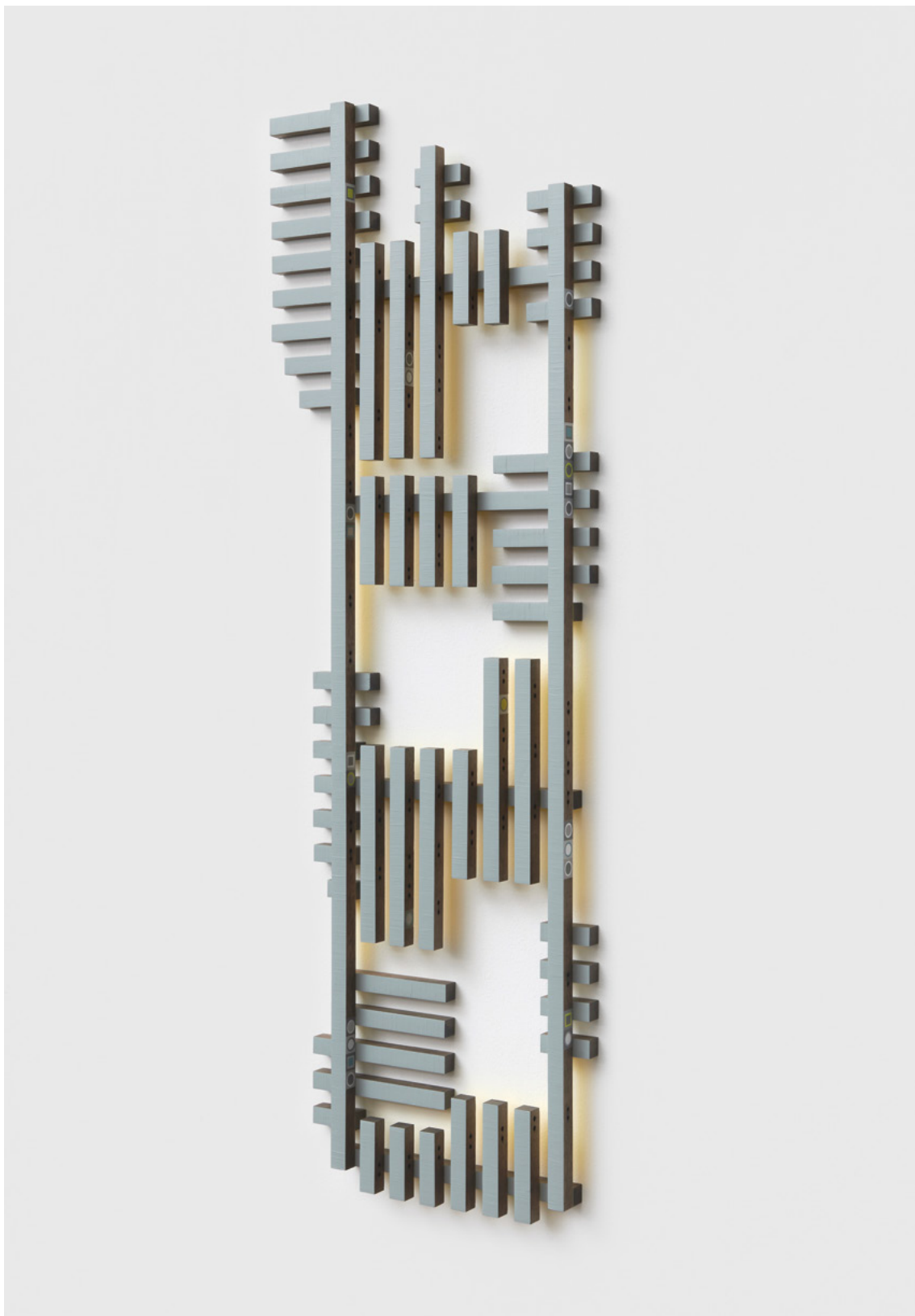


Plate 29

Ben Westoby 'Axolotl' 2021 Walnut, birch and acrylic paint. 73.2 x 25.2 x 2.4 cm.

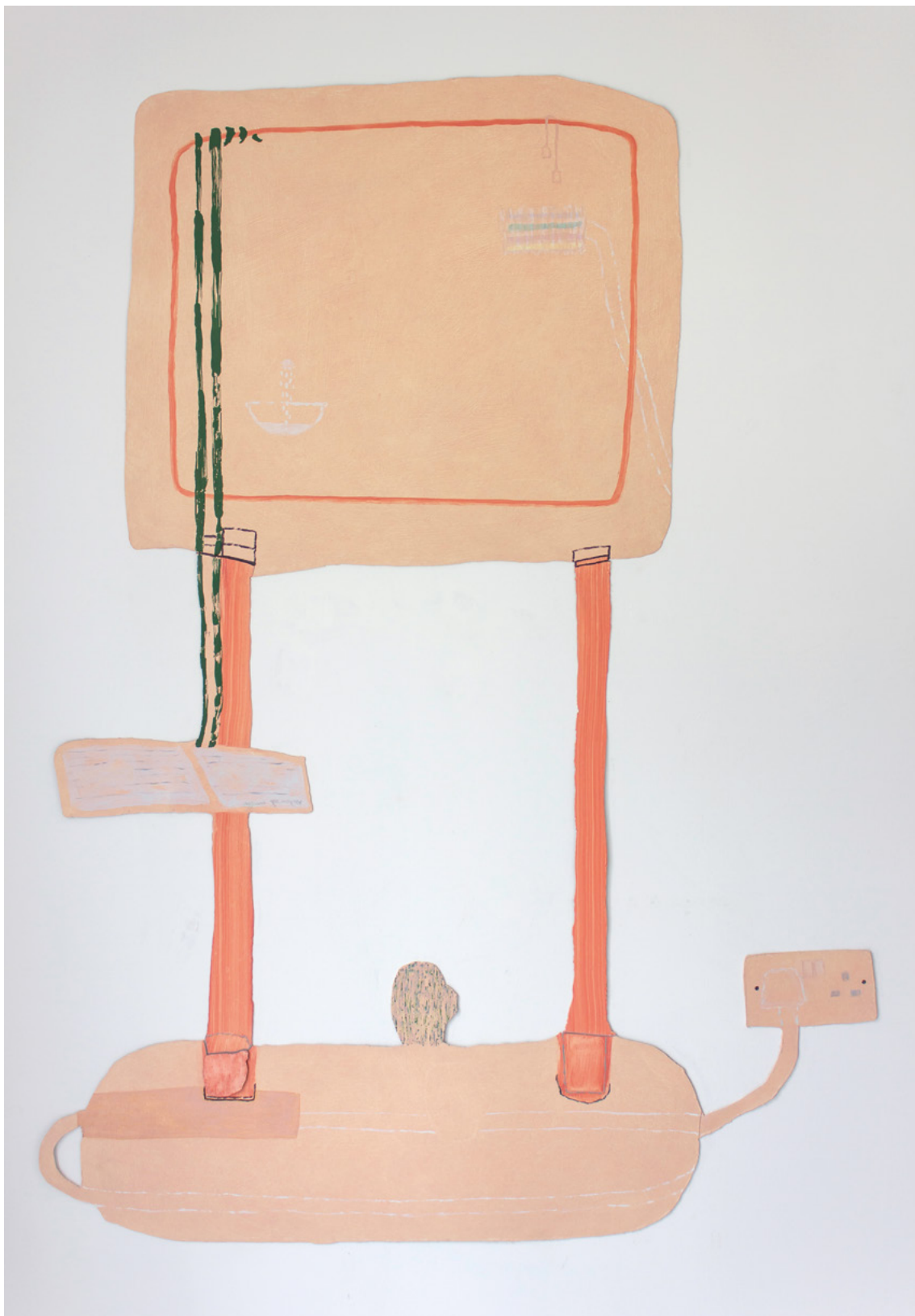


Plate 30

Lyndsey Gilmour 'Ground Floor Right (end of part II)' 2024-25 Oil and encaustic on steel.
148.5 x 108 x 0.1 cm.



Plate 31

Peter Chalmers 'Raise the curtain again' 2022 Emulsion on canvas with oil paint on panel frame.
38 x 40 x 4 cm.



Plate 32

Fay Nicolson 'Tableau 1' 2022 UV Paint on brushed aluminium in artist's frame. 27 x 21 cm.



Plate 33

Larry Achiampong 'Glyth: Series 2 #3' 2018 Archival C-Type Print. 69 x 50.5 cm.



Plate 34

Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq 'Pyramid III' 2024 Graphite on paper, framed in black walnut.
120 x 120 cm (drawing dimensions).

Courtesy the artist and Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK. Photo: © Damian Griffiths

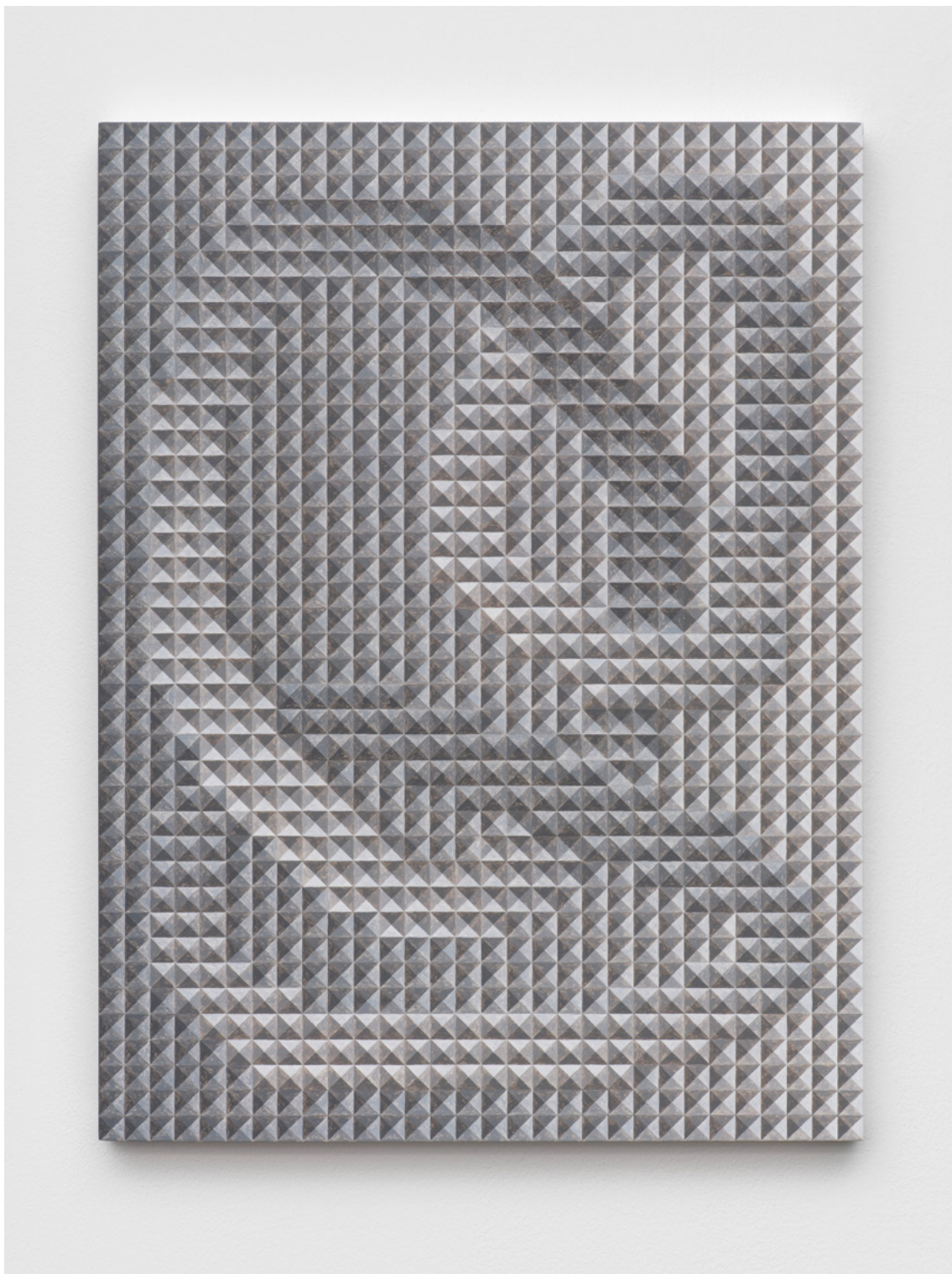


Plate 35

Ben Westoby 'Secrets' 2023 Acrylic paint on panel. 40.5 x 30.5 x 2.4 cm.



Plate 36

Matthew Burrows 'Sternō III' 2022 Acrylic and sand on jute. 200 x 200 cm.



Plate 37

Michele Fletcher 'Better to Burn Out' 2022 Oil on linen. 140 x 100 cm.



Plate 38

Yun Kyung Jeong 'Quotidian Fever-LD' 2025 Acrylic & mixed media on unprimed canvas. 185 x 147 cm.

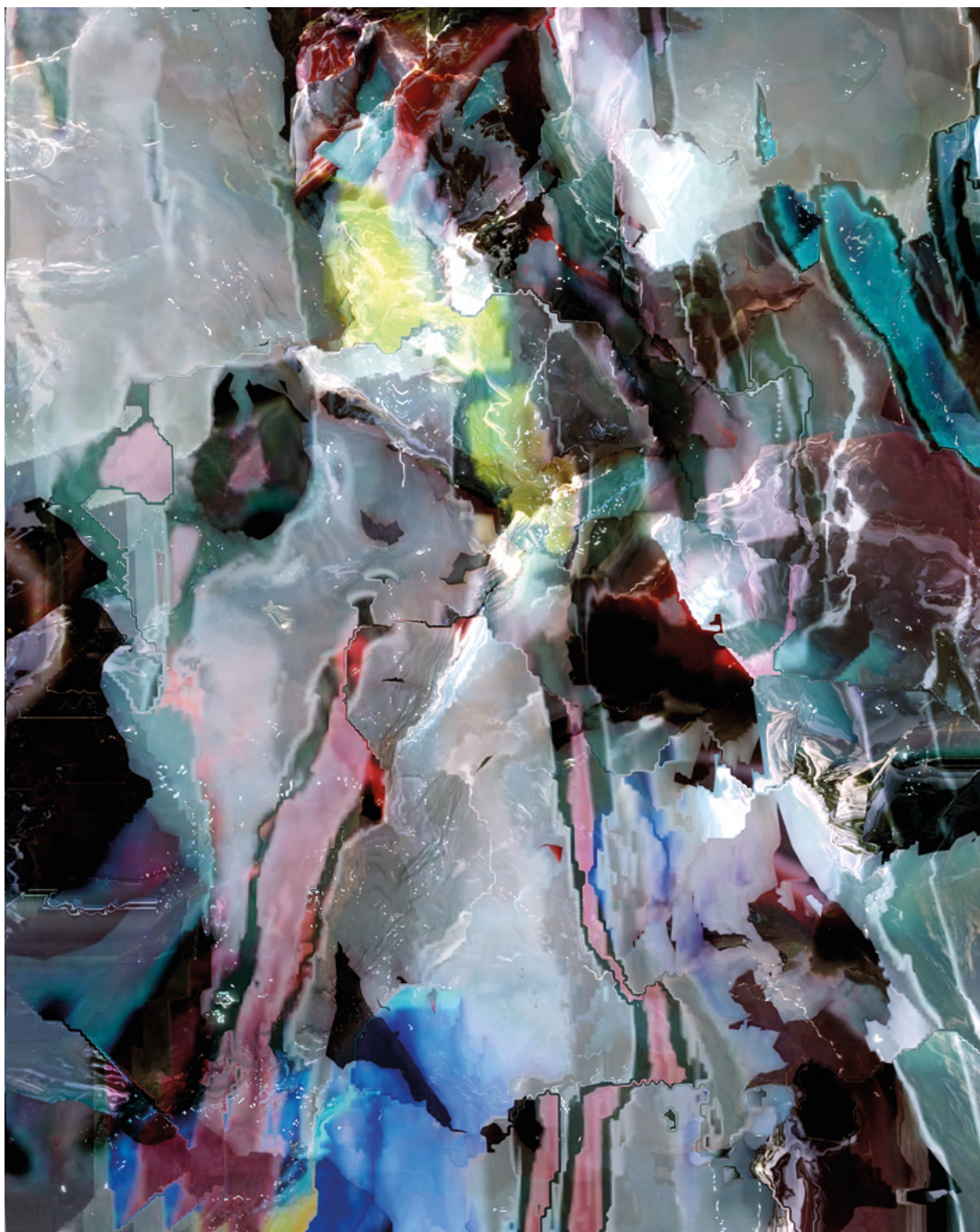


Plate 39

James Irwin 'surfacecollider (Ghost in the Machine)' 2025 Python bot controlling GLTF files, mp3 files within three.js in New Art City. Duration ∞ 55" screen 122.7 x 71.2 cm.



Plate 40

Ben Jamie 'Overstory ii' 2024 Oil, wax, sand and charcoal on flax. 170 x 130 cm.



Plate 41

Craig Barber 'A line as thin as a thread' 2024 Oil on linen. 102 x 122 cm.

ARTISTS' RESPONSES TO 'FLAT VOLUME':

THEIR TAKE ON OBJECT / FORM / VOLUME IN THEIR WORK

ORDERED IN RELATION TO PLATE ORDER

MĂDĂLINA ZAHARIA

Volume for me is bound by words and movement, it carries an aggregate narrative in time and space and forces us to approach it with both wisdom and action. To see volume, one must be able to speak volume, to define it's shape and mass in relation to our own feelings and deepest desires.

CHARLEY PETERS

Volume and form in my work are both illusions and truths, slippery concepts in a world where digital and physical realities blur. I'm fascinated by the that way paint – a physical, tactile material – can suggest optical depth or solidity while simultaneously asserting the flatness of the canvas. My paintings, which resemble 3D renders of abstract but familiar objects, explore how binary terms such as abstraction and figuration dissolve in the digital age. For me, painting is a grounding, embodied act that slows time, offering a space to reflect on how we perceive and construct reality in an era shaped by screens, AI, and virtual experiences.

YUMI KATAYAMA

I always imagine our world on earth and cosmic world as some volume of big dimensional space. And it is an exciting challenge to express it on a flat, two dimensional canvas.

SARAH POOTS

A shallow painterly space seems to me to be the most magical of things. It is a space so restricted and intimate and yet one which allows for so much fullness – of volume – and expansiveness. When I paint I always try to think of these disparate things coming together. I want to create a space which brings the slight and overlooked to centre stage.

SCOTT MCCRACKEN

One of painting's most interesting contradictions is the dilemma between volume and flatness, of how volume can be realised through flatness but also wants to seemingly resist it. My work has swung between both embracing and rejecting volume, of using volume as a way of describing condensed shallow space and flatness to imply an expansive deeper space.

LOUISA CHAMBERS

My practice over the past twenty years always returns to ideas concerning 2D/3D and thinking about how shapes and shadows create spaces on a flat visual plane no matter the subject. The depicted shape switches from being observed, subverted/skewed from memory or completely imagined. The shadow that turns the shape to a form, has its own depth through the painted mark situating the form in a real or completely imagined space.

KEITH ASHCROFT

The contradictory nature of flatness and depth in painting; the intrinsic potential for 'opening up' illusory space on a 'flat' white surface, gives flatness a kind of 'ontology' status that links the ontological value of a painting to its situation, to the topology of the painting surface and its locality in real space. Flatness has the effect of grounding or stabilising a painting, giving it a vertical continuity which distinguishes itself from illusory depth, inserting a kind of Brechtian fourth wall that acknowledges the viewer through interactions with flatness.

NICHOLAS HATFULL

Such a beguiling question it's hard to be succinct, but...towards the centre of the Alexander Mosaic (at the Archaeological Museum in Naples) a horse's rear abuts the picture plane. Nested gradations of tesserae and a limpid value pattern create the illusion of something firmly modelled, signed off in style with a highlight whose shape reminds of both a lung and fleck of mozzarella. Embossed little reliefs of wheat or some such pastoral allusion on (allegedly) compostable coffee cup lids hold my attention, too.

SARAH LONGWORTH-WEST

'Flat Volume' was born out of my own practice, interests and draw towards other artists' work as well. My hope is that both the viewer and reader can access the articulation of my ideas about Volume throughout the 'Curators text' in this publication alongside experiencing the curation of the exhibition itself. Both exist as different, yet complimentary ways to gain full insight into my description what the term 'Flat Volume' and volume mean within contemporary painters' discourse and context.

Volume within my practice, relates to a number of things. In brief; what I am attracted to use as a 'prompt' to work with, from the real world...with a strong sense of pull to render the object as a form, as oppose to flatten it out. This also involves, on occasion, using the additions of my gesso 'remnants' which are physical forms themselves, as part of the composition of the paintings.

CARL ROWE

There is something tangible about shallow space, implied or actual. I enjoy using perspective to engender faith in an object or surface, but also to baffle the viewer and mislead their interpretation of order. I think we happily surrender our belief when looking at a picture of landscape, but representations of narrow perspective and surface easily become conflated with actual rather than illusionary space.

Introducing graphic elements such as logos, letter forms, and geometry interfere with the vocabulary of pictorial space. A brush mark can be accepted as itself, congealed matter on the surface of the canvas. But a cartoon representation of a brush mark is both paint and representation. Graphic elements float in a hinterland between physicality and the pictorial.

BEN COVE

In the exhibition catalogue 'Ha ha what does that represent?' which I have at home that Ben gave me, which was curated by Katrina Blannin and Francesca Simon and shown at Standpoint gallery in 2012; Ben wrote about his work, that it; 'stems from two apparently conflicting urges: to follow the seductive pull of flat geometric abstraction on the one hand, and a desire to evoke solid representational form on the other.' Further explaining, 'The play between flatness and depth along with the use of the drawn line owes much to the language of architectural drawing... Utilising geometry and symbolic motifs, the work depicts forms and spaces with a faux sense of depth that rest on, or slip off the edges of the canvas.'¹

¹ 'Ha ha what does that represent?' curated by Katrina Blannin and Francesca Simon at shown at Standpoint gallery in 2012

CHLOE LE TISSIER

Form and shape are central to constructing composition in my work. The three dimensional structure of the vitrine in 'Their Shoes' occupies over half of the composition, and acts to suggest both scale and a volume in which the family of swans are encapsulated. Described primarily by a line running through the centre of the canvas, the marks which construct the vitrine almost vanish in places. This partial depiction is used purposefully to allow the viewer to complete the structure, whilst describing a depth that is questionable, the form can at once appear as flat shape and as three-dimensional structure. This is an important way of suggesting concepts in the painting, as well as depicting the scene and a figurative narrative.

NEIL GALL

The title of the show reduces my painting practice (and I'm assuming the other artists!) to the elemental basic dichotomy of what's interesting about painting. Even when modelling forms which are 3-d in nature I feel a constant desire to return to the picture's flatness. Whether that is through colour contrasts or texture, sheen or mattness; I kind of want to play on the surface of the painting as if it's as flat as a tabletop. It's not really like that of course; illusion is ever present but that's the exciting play off.

..depict something whilst gaming oneself to believe one is moving pigment around on the picture plane as if one was simply doing a bit of DIY and painting a door. If I could reference the lodestar artist in the exhibition outline, Paul Nash then I would say I aspire to his kind of landscape poetry whilst dreaming of slathering on the paint as if I was Frank Stella doing an early stripe painting. I kind of want to be both guys at once.

Probably irreconcilable positions but therein lies the tension for the painter of Flat Volumes.

LESLEY BUNCH

I build my paintings in many flat, transparent layers, 'sculpting' with colour. I am interested in the moment when the colour-sculpted presence takes on an expression of 'suchness', and becomes an intricately detailed, solid form. Ultimately my paintings are a visual language resisting verbal interpretation, untied to literal meaning, an "absented presence". They sit silently in the globalised, unanchored, over-information that we increasingly drift in.

PHYLLIDA BARLOW

Barlow explained "Maybe the reason I have used painterly processes when drawing has been to avoid illustration and develop qualities of what a proposed sculpture might entail through the use of colour as much as line. Colour provides a kind of mass, which can be abstract as well as image."²

KIRSTY HARRIS

I am interested in the way the detonation of atomic bombs from history disrupt and scar those barren landscapes and vibrant skies. These swirling, bubbling apparitions are like curses or spells that we've cast on ourselves, so violent. I wanted to relay a sense of movement and mass within the frame of the painting and capture the blinding light Vs the weight of the gritty dust that the mushroom cloud throws up.

DAMIEN MEADE

Broadly speaking, all paintings are a negotiation with volume and form, implicitly as images, and explicitly as a physical object amongst other worldly objects. In both respects, a recurring notion in my own paintings is the uneasy relationship between objects and desire.

2 Bad Copies: the drawings of Phyllida Barlow. Henry Moore Institute, essays on sculpture, Issue 65. Published April 2012. Conjoined exhibition at Leeds Art Gallery. Sophie Raikes (Assistant Curator, Collection) Phyllida Barlow in conversation with Sophie Raikes page 29

REBECCA FOSTER-CLARKE

Volume and form in my practice are essential for emphasising the tension and contrast central to my exploration of female archetypes. Manipulating scale allows me to amplify the presence of fear or vulnerability, while the physicality of form gives weight to the everyday struggles women face. These elements help translate abstract ideas into tangible works that engage viewers with the unsettling realities behind the narratives.

STEVIE DIX

The first work I made in oil paint, over ten years ago – 2014 – was very stripped back and traditionally abstract. I saw the work of Lee Krasner and I felt inspired to say more with less. I learnt the language of forms and colour, and how to translate complex feelings using only these two tools. Soon it felt natural and very free. My work today uses a lot more figuration, but I still rely on that same language of form as the first step in starting to make an image. It feels as if that was my first teacher.

CELIA HEMPTON

Volume in painting is interesting to me I suppose for the obvious reason that paintings are generally speaking flat and to varying degrees illusionary. The painting in 'Flat Volume' was made from observation of a vagina, but it could be many things. I liked the idea of a penetrative object or surface that can also protrude and morph into other things. Is it more or less assertive as a protruding shape? Does it's ability to be penetrative and pliable imply passivity, or can mysterious fluidity be more powerful than what is rigid? Is it also an obelisk, plant, flame, landscape or sea creature? What about the internal negative volume and what can grow from here?

LORNA ROBERTSON

With volume or form my aim is to achieve a sense of something solid, a form in space that you believe in, a tangible version of what you can see and feel. Through using thick and thin paint I explore object/ground relationships and I often work with lines accumulating them to create mass, weight and depth. Sculptors drawings especially interest me, perhaps because they have an eye on building something physical and concrete.

JENNIFER CAROLINE CAMPBELL

'I am a cauldron' 31.10.24

I'm especially interested in how gathered objects; magical, medicinal, decorative, shared and edible things can combine to form something new, re-arrangeable and worth more than the sum of its parts. The thing assembled might become a picnic, a medicine bundle, a wardrobe, a shrine, a look or a sensibility. I am made up of gathered knowledge, gossip, hair clips, venom, vitamins and connections. Put this hair clip that X gave me in my hair just to try it, adjust it, add another one, and another, because it is not transactional. It is a voluminous place where collected fragments are rearranged into multiple selves. I am a perpetually accumulating and rearranging bundle, I am a cauldron.

IAN HARTSHORNE

'Flat Volume' is a seemingly contradictory proposition, I like this as I've often thought of painting as the thinnest form of sculpture, and sculpture as the fattest form of painting.

DESMOND BRETT

Volume and form are intrinsic sculptural qualities. In my practice as a sculptor, I am interested in the possibilities of volume as a way for sculpture to extend into space pushing out into our physical realm. Their volume depends upon the illusion of mass to suggest solid forms protruding into space. The sculptural objects are, however, thin skinned hollow casts rather than thick matter. They are hollow shells that possess volume.

The forms of my sculptures are the result of modelling clay – a ubiquitous material intrinsic to sculptures history. Clay affords me the ability to change form – to shapeshift and remake forms ad infinitum. As such, I consider form to be in a condition of continuum.

ALAENA TURNER

In my studio practice I think of volume in terms of tension across a surface, or a fluctuation between positioning the painting as image or object. I'm interested in pursuing forms that reveal themselves slowly, perhaps not what they first appear to be.

SARAH RYDER

Embracing multidimensionality and temporality, as a cognitive and physical approach endlessly feeds my curiosity about making paintings. My painting process continues long after the paint has dried – with colours, marks, and areas separated by flat plane and or flip side distance, affecting each other as intimate neighbours in various iterations. Transient painterly volume is explored in sliding scales of flatness from the cacophonous surface layer of shadows, highlights, reflections, and ageing, to the overall thingness of form the painting settles in after some bodily action or other.

BEN WESTOBY

My experience in making images began with photography, where I learned about composition making through the lens of a camera. This became a space for resolving spatial problems, where each object in the field needed to be arranged so they find a suitable position. For this, the volumes in the scene needed to be broken down into constituent parts and flattened so they become manageable. This manner of working is reflected in my painting, where volume is essentially reduced to two states – foreground and background – represented by shaded cells. These two possibilities are further constrained by their organisation within a grid, which has a specific resolution (or number of spaces) where the cells can be placed. I think of this space as a framework for experimentation, where I can arrange volumes and shape the contours of a malleable terrain. I think of this as a visual paradox that emerges when this new geometry interacts with the closed volume's solid surface – regarding both my Painting and Sculptural wall relief works.

LYNDSAY GILMOUR

Shapes became prevalent in my paintings, both in the form they take and their pictorial depictions, by considering the representation of objects through their (cast) shadows. In the book *A Short History of the Shadow*, Victor I. Stoichita notes that "The effect of the shadow is to reduce the surface volume". Shadow and thus shape, holds connotations with painting through their shared identities; being two-dimensional representations, copies, iterations and versions that offer an alternative to our existing perceptions and shared realities.

PETER CHALMERS

I've long regarded Painting as existing on a spectrum from visual honesty to visual opportunity when considering it as a medium, not a subject. In other words, from paint being paint – celebrating its inherent physical properties – through to its potential for illusion and trompe l'oeil. Form and volume can sit anywhere on this spectrum: paint itself has form and volume, and it can be applied to make this particularly conspicuous; it can also be applied to focus the eye on an illusion of something else. There are of course artists whose work very intentionally explores both simultaneously: from Rembrandt to Freud and Auerbach, to name just a few. My work has at different times explored aspects of these ideas, often considering Painting as object, questioning surface, exploring flatness, the mundane and what is real. The ideas within 'Flat Volume' resonate deeply with me.

FAY NICOLSON

'Form', and the word's provenance in Modernism, has interested me (seen in the Oskar Schlemmer quote) 'Over and over pure form' that I've used as a title for a poem/performance and a solo show. I was drawn to the gossip around formalism as a way of critiquing its 'purity'. I'm not interested in making 3D works, and so spatial volume is not something I think about. I am interested in the geometry of observation though, and how volume becomes shape and tone through documentation – and how these images (which are representations of form rather than the thing itself) can manipulate our understanding and expectations of space.

LARRY ACHIAMPONG

The idea of volume and form holds a great stake in my practice, in my approach to making. But not perhaps in the way that people might traditionally think about volume and form. By this I mean through the idea of symbolism, the very essence of ideas, the very essence of systems. When I think about my Akan heritage, within our belief systems we have symbols called Adinkra. The importance of this is how messages are conveyed in the lineage of my culture, these messages would be shared through stories by travelling artists – griot – who utilise the spoken word, song, sound, written forms and other ways to express and convey messages through stories. I don't feel that there is a difference between that and the approach that I have with my work; the importance of volume and form is thus represented through the use of message and symbol. The message could quite simply be in any art form, for example not only a large sculptural work, it can and must be by any means. It can and must be able to adapt and to exist in any and many environments necessary and is certainly not exclusive to that of the gallery space.³

MOHAMMED QASIM ASHFAQ

It's really difficult to understand what form or volume are. Especially so, when you're trying to simply draw an object that can illicit the feeling of those two qualities with the use of Graphite alone. Drawing is one of the first things we did as humans and whatever history that holds is something that continues in all actions that continue under the cloak of Drawing. Personally, with the work, it's not like I'm trying to make huge volumes of a specific space, I'm just trying to create a sense of depth, something that can exist with the very simple action of drawing, and the very minimal movement of a line. It sort of comes together in a form that, when the light hits just right, it comes together and sort of works. Form is very simple, volume is very simple and drawing is very simple. So they kind of sit hand in hand. To get them to the stage of simplicity, is not simple.

³ Transcript of a voicenote received 7.3.25

MATTHEW BURROWS MBE

Painting transforms what we see because we are always in a dynamic relationship between the surface and the imaginative experience of space. It's not merely an illusion but an equivalent to our experience of reality. It must feel like the world more than it looks like it. Perhaps volume is then best understood as something felt, so much so that it can be grasped and held.

MICHELE FLETCHER

In my practice, form/volume is a spatial presence within the 2 dimensional – flat – surface of the picture plane. Form in my painting, is fluid, dynamic and haptic.

YUN KYUNG JEONG

'Flat Volume' is a complete expression of the ambiguity in my process of continuing the paintings and their scenes, that marks the end of a journey that is still being explored.

This term reflects the journey that my work takes, and through it, it is probably the most uncluttered expression, that relieves anxiety caused by lack and manifests my psychological signs and symptoms.

JAMES IRWIN

I'm interested in the idea of giving volume to flat, dead digital images by using computational effects in ways that produce emotive, embodied responses in the viewer.

A lot of my work probes digital aesthetics for signs of life. I work with code, AI systems and software applications via techno-semiotics – a machine's eye view of the world that I am interested in using to make us feel things.

As such, what I do – and how I make the work – operates according to cybernetic feedback loops between my body in meatspace⁴ and digital sounds and images generated by the computer. This is where I see the overlap between the work that I make and painting. Both processes activate feedback loops between the human body, technologies and materials in ways that breathe life – and volume – into the artworks that emerge.

BEN JAMIE

My paintings aim to transcend the physical canvas, inviting viewers into a metaphysical realm. I distort perspective and layer imagery to challenge perceptions of reality, revealing the illusory nature of form and volume.

CRAIG BARBER

The geometric forms in my paintings stem from my fascination with structures – whether institutional, political, or physical. These structures appear in various stages of completion, and as I developed this body of work, I began to see them as persistent elements within the images: a recurring presence, omen, or spectre. To me, they represent both a reflection of the world we inhabit and a suggestion of narratives unfolding in parallel realms. While these shapes establish volumetric space within the compositions, their geometric and linear qualities are balanced by a sense of spontaneity and fluidity, in some ways aligning with the playful freedom of a doodle.

4 Term for the physical world, as opposed to cyberspace or a virtual environment.

ARTISTS' BIOS

LARRY ACHIAMPONG (b.1984, UK, British Ghanaian) is a BAFTA longlisted (2023) and Jarman Award nominated (2021) artist, filmmaker and musician. He completed a BA in Mixed Media Fine Art at University of Westminster in 2005 and an MA in Sculpture at The Slade School of Fine Art in 2008. In 2020 Achiampong was awarded the Stanley Picker fellowship and in 2019 received the Paul Hamlyn Artist award in recognition for his practice.

Recent solo exhibitions include Wayfinder, Turner Contemporary/MK Gallery/ BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Margate, Milton Keynes, Gateshead (2022-2023); Relic Traveller: Where You and I Come From, We Know That We Are Not Here Forever, Phi Foundation for Contemporary Art, Montreal (2021); Beyond the Substrata, curated by Norman Rosenthal, Copperfield Gallery at Frieze Focus, London (2020); When the Sky Falls, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton (2020); Pan African Flag For The Relic Travellers Alliance & Relic Traveller, Phase 1, 019, Ghent (2019); Dividednation, Primary, Nottingham (2019).

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KEITH ASHCROFT (b.1977 St Helens, Merseyside). He graduated from Manchester School of Art in 2000 with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art. He currently lives and works in Salford as a painter and Lecturer in Fine Art Painting at The Open College of the Arts / The Open University. Keith is also the founding member of OA Studios and Co-Director of Oceans Apart Gallery in Salford, Greater Manchester.

Recent exhibitions include 'Flatland', The FG Gallery, Knutsford (2024); 'Creative Roots', World of Glass, St Helens (2023); 'Cut from Cloth' (Solo Exhibition) Huddersfield Art Gallery, Huddersfield (2022); 'Walking in Two Worlds', Elysium Gallery, Swansea (2022);

'Enough is Definitely Enough', Oceans Apart, Salford (2020); Contemporary British Painting Prize Exhibition, Menier Gallery, London (2019); 'Two Fold', Oceans Apart, Salford (2019);

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MOHAMMED QASIM ASHFAQ (b.1982, Falkirk) Lives in Dunfermline, Scotland. MA, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL 2008 and BA Fine Art, Grays School of Art, Aberdeen, 2005. Solo Exhibitions include: INTERVALS, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK. VOLUME, Vortic London Collective (online) 2021. BLACK SUN, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK 2017.

Group Exhibitions include: Oceans of Milk, APSARA Studio, London, UK 2021. We Are Not Alone, British Council at ATHR, Jeddah, SA Drawing Biennial, Drawing Room, London, UK 2017. It's Me to the World, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK 2016. What we all lack, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK 2016. Mirrorcity, Hayward Gallery, London, UK 2014. Open Heart Surgery, The Moving Museum, Dubai, AE 2013. The 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT7), Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane AU 2012

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CRAIG BARBER (b.1981) is an artist and educator who lives and works in Cromer, UK. Since graduating from MA Painting at Winchester School of Art in 2004 he has exhibited and performed at venues including MAC, Birmingham; Lanchester gallery, Coventry; H-Project Space, Bangkok; the London Short Film Festival; The Public, West Bromwich and Francis Kyle Gallery, London.

Throughout his career, Barber has engaged in various media, including sound and performance, while consistently returning to painting as his

primary medium. His work often explores themes of construction, collapse, and the tension between coherence and fragmentation within societal and political constructs.

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PHYLLIDA BARLOW (1944 – 2023) studied at Chelsea College of Art and Slade School of Art. Over a career that spanned six decades, Barlow took inspiration from her surroundings to create imposing installations that can be at once menacing and playful. Barlow's restless invented forms stretch the limits of mass, volume and height as they block, straddle and balance precariously. The audience is challenged into a new relationship with the sculptural object, the gallery environment and the world beyond.

Barlow exhibited extensively across institutions internationally: Museum of Contemporary Art, Toronto, Canada (2023); Public Art Fund, New York NY (2023); Chillida Leku, Hernani, Spain (2023); Sprengel Museum, Hanover, Germany (2022); ARTIST ROOMS, Tate Modern, London, UK (2021); Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2021); The Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2019); La Biennale di Venezia, British Pavilion, Venice, Italy (2017); Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich, Switzerland (2016); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas TX (2015); Duveen Commission at Tate Britain, London, UK (2014). In 2022, Barlow was awarded the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung's Kurt Schwitters Prize.

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DESMOND BRETT PHD (b.1973, Ipswich). 2024 – Awarded PhD Sculpture from the Royal College of Art. Thesis entitled: '(Re) Modelling Form: Sculpture in Flux'. MFA Sculpture, The Slade School of Art (1997-1999) BA (Hons) Fine Art (Sculpture), The Slade School of Art (1993-1997).

Recent exhibitions include; [Re] charge [Exchange] East Gallery, Norwich University of the Arts (2024), Desmond Brett, 303 Projects, Lowestoft (2024), Gesticulator, ASC Gallery, London (2023), Silver Kraut, Pavilion Milchof, Berlin (2023), Nothing Matter, St. Mary's Works, Norwich (2022), Unstable Monuments, Magistrates Court, Bristol (2022), Primeyarc, Great Yarmouth (2021), We: You, Me, Firstsite, Colchester (2017), Daybreak, Safehouse 1 & 2, Peckham, London (2017), Thought Positions, Huddersfield Gallery (2015)

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LESLEY BUNCH studied at Goldsmiths' College and S.O.A.S., University of London. She has a BA in Fine Art & Art History and an MA in Archaeology (Edo Period Japan). Bunch was awarded the Contemporary British Painting Prize in 2022.

She has exhibited in the UK, Europe, Asia, and the US, with solo shows 'Absence : Presence' Rome, 'Shadow Language' Seoul, and 'Cut Two Pieces in Three' London. Group shows include: '50th International Award Exhibition' San Diego Art Institute; 'Ten Artists to Watch' LACDA Los Angeles; 'Talking Things' Blyth Gallery Imperial College; 'Stillness in Movement' Bermondsey Project Space; 'Slow Painting' Studio KIND; 'Adrift' Originalprojects; 'X' Contemporary British Painting, NCA Newcastle; 'Silent Disco 23' Greystone Industries; 'Stand and See' Wimbledon Space; 'Prized' OPO ArtSpace; 'Multitude' Fondazione Luciana Matalon Milan.

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MATTHEW BURROWS MBE (b.1971) MA Royal College of Art, 1995. Solo exhibitions in

and Through Wellington Arch Museum, London, 2022-3; Beyond the Garden Wall Vigo Gallery London, 2017; Para-Dice Vigo Gallery London 2014; Cultic Twister Alexia Goethe Gallery London 2009. Group exhibitions Assembly Rye Creative Center Rye 2024; Hard Paper Phoneix Art Space Brighton 2024; Things Will Continue to Change The Koppel Project London 2022; Towards Night Towner Art Gallery Eastbourne 2017; Permeable Edge Otter Gallery Chichester 2016; Wet and Dry painting to the edges Observer Building Hastings 2015; London Twelve Prague City Museum 2012; Selektionseffekte Blain|Southern Berlin 2011

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JENNIFER CAROLINE CAMPBELL (b.1985) graduated from the Slade in 2014 with an MFA (Distinction) in painting and a full scholarship from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She has taught at Camberwell College of Arts UAL, Arts University Bournemouth and the University of the West of England.

Recent solo exhibitions include Cake Options and Escape Options, Transition gallery London (2024), Ever After Slices, Atalante, Gothenberg (2019) and Glamorous, Outpost Gallery, Norwich (2018). Recent Group exhibitions include The Look, Transition gallery London (2024), Witch Marks, The Moinories Colchester (2024), In Gratitude For all Times we Start Over, Flatland Projects Bexhill (2022).

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PETER CHALMERS (b.1985) Nairn, Scotland. Graduate of Gray's School of Art (2007). Since 2012, he has taught part-time in their Fine Art department with a focus on Painting and is an early career Practice-Based Researcher. He maintains his own studio practice and works as an artists' assistant for the remainder of the week in Glasgow, where he lives.

Peter has exhibited widely and is the recipient of multiple awards, scholarships and residencies including the RSA John Kinross Scholarship. He has works

included in several public and private collections including the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh and the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.

rgu-repository.worktribe.com/person/170643/peter-chalmers

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LOUISA CHAMBERS (b.1983) graduated from Royal College of Art in 2007 (MA Painting). Resident Artist at Primary Nottingham and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University. She has exhibited both nationally, internationally and worked on public site-specific commissions. Selected exhibitions include: Flat, Primary (Nottingham, 2025), Objects, Axel Obiger (Berlin, 2023), Maquette, No Show Space (London, 2023), Telling Tales, Platform Projects, Athens (Greece, 2022), Thru' These Architects Eyes, PAPER Gallery, Manchester Contemporary 2021, Criss-Cross, Angear Visitor Centre, Lakeside Arts Centre (Solo – Nottingham, 2021), Enough is Definitely Enough, Pineapple Black (Middlesbrough, 2020) and Manuscript – Letter Home, CAA Arts Museum, Hangzhou (China, 2018-2019).

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BEN COVE (1974 – 2016) grew up in Manchester and was based in London. MFA, Goldsmiths University of London (2008); BA Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University (2001) and BA Architecture at The University of Nottingham (1995).

Solo exhibitions included Modern Language at Peter von Kant, London (2015), Vernacular Hangover at Acme Project Space, London (2013), Practical Mechanics at Cell Project Space (2006), London and New Plastic Universal at Castlefield Gallery, Manchester (2004). Since 2016, his work has been posthumously exhibited a number of times, including Double Dutch, a solo presentation at Aspex Portsmouth, John Moores Painting Prize 2016 and Ben Cove in Space, [Space] 2023-4.

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STEVIE DIX (b.1990, Belgium). Lives and works in Genk, Belgium. Dix is represented by Hannah Barry Gallery and has work in collection Internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include CHAOS, carlier|gebauer, Madrid, ES 2025; Starburst, L21, Barcelona, ES 2023; Beside Ourselves, Galerie Chloe Salgado, Paris, FR 2022; Tennis Elbow, The Journal Gallery, New York, US 2022; Magnesium, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK 2021. Recent group exhibitions include Tainted Love, Super Dakota, Brussels, BE 2024; Sin Centre, Hannah Barry Gallery, London, UK 2024; MENSCHENBILD, carlier|gebauer, Madrid, ES 2024; Coal and Birch, Outpost, Copenhagen, DK 2023; FINIS TERRAE, Het einde. Een begin, Gallery Geukens & De Vil, Antwerp, BE 2022.

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MICHELE FLETCHER is originally from Canada (b.1963) lives and works in London. She studied at Goldsmiths College, BA hons Fine Art and Critical Theory (2003) and Chelsea, graduating with a MA in 2007. The recipient of The Neville Burston Award for Painting (Goldsmiths College) and the Marmite Prize for Painting, she was also a Royal Overseas League Scholar at Hospitalfields, via the Patrick Alan Fraser Trust, Scotland. Michele's painting Compost, was a prize winner in the 2020 John Moores Painting Prize. Selected exhibitions include; Aftertime, solo exhibition, White Cube, Hong Kong 2025; If Not Now, When? Patricia Fleming Gallery, Glasgow – group show with Christine Borland and Wendy McMurdo 2024; Between a Flutter and a Fold, solo exhibition, Tiger Gallery, London, UK 2023; Entwined, Plants in Contemporary Painting, Huddersfield Art Gallery, UK 2022.

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REBECCA FOSTER-CLARKE (b.1999) Lives and works in Norwich, UK. Foster-Clarke Graduated with a BA (hons) Fine Art from Norwich University of the Arts and won the Freelands

Painting Prize in 2021 exhibiting at the Freelands Foundation Gallery, London. Solo exhibition include, Disturbia Moosey Gallery, Norwich 2024 and Pins and Needles, Moosey Gallery, Hoxton in 2023. Group exhibitions include Humour Me, Haricot Gallery (London), 2024; In Search of Lost Time

Liliya Gallery (London), 2024; Across the Pond Good Mother Gallery (Los Angeles), 2024.

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NEIL GALL (b.1967) received his BA in Painting at Gray's School of Art before attending the Slade School of Art, London, 1991–1993. He was Abbey Major Scholar, British School at Rome, 1993–1994 and in 1996–1997 he was Artist-in-Residence at Durham Cathedral. Recent solo exhibitions include, Slower, Primary, Miami, 2024, Painting & Plinths, Holtermann Fine Art, London, 2024, Day Release, Aurel Scheibler, Berlin, 2024, Covers and Counterfeits, The MAC, Belfast, 2018, The Studio: Cover Versions, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, 2018. Publications include: Neil Gall, Drawing (Ridinghouse, 2020) ,Neil Gall: Works 2007–2011 (Hatje Cantz, 2012) and Neil Gall: Shelf Life (Black Dog Publishing, 2007).

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LYNDSEY GILMOUR (b.1988) Lives & works in Aberdeen. Obtained a Master of Fine Arts Painting Degree from the Slade School of Fine Art, London (2014), and gained a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree, specialising in Painting, at Gray's School of Art (2010). Gilmour is a Lecturer in Fine Art Painting and a practice-based researcher at Gray's School of Art. Gilmour is the co-facilitator of the practice-led research project Painted Conversations.

Awards include; Grays 140 Performing the Archive Women's Voices Award, Lyon and Turnbull Award for Painting, RSA Latimer Award, The William Coldstream Prize, Dewar Arts Award and SIET Award. Recent exhibitions include; Myriad at Oceans Apart Gallery, Beep Painting Biennial, Tentative Formations

solo exhibition at Patriothall and Painted Conversations at Whitespace Gallery.

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IAN HARTSHORNE PHD (b.1968) is Director and co-founder of Apollo Painting School. He trained for his M.A at Chelsea College of Art and was a Stanley Picker fellow at Kingston University and a Boise Scholar at The Slade. He completed a PhD, which addressed the affects of digital production methods on our social memories. He has exhibited extensively across U.S.A and Europe. He is also a founder member of the Teaching Painting organisation. He is working towards completing the curation of a seven-part exhibition cycle called 'Fully Awake' and is also co-editor of the book 'Teaching Painting: How can painting be taught in British art schools?'

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KIRSTY HARRIS (b.1978) Raised in Yorkshire. Lives in London, with a studio at Chisenhale Arts Place. Harris graduated from Cass School of Art, London in 2001 and works part time as an artist assistant to Fiona Banner aka The Vanity Press, since 2012. Co-founder of Come Quick Disaster with Henrietta Armstrong, a platform for art. Member of the Contemporary British Painting group and on the steering committee for Broken Grey Wires, an arts and mental health organisation.

Harris has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad with galleries including Saatchi Gallery (London) Vane Gallery (Newcastle), Charlie Smith London (London), StudioKIND (Devon), Royal Academy of Arts (London), Westbeth Gallery (New York) Auxiliary Warehouse (Middlesbrough), Tremenhoe Gallery (Cornwall), Cello Factory (London), APT Gallery (London), Huddersfield Art Gallery (Huddersfield), G37 Galerie (Berlin), Semjon Contemporary (Berlin).

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NICHOLAS HATFULL (born Tokyo, 1984) lives and works in Norwich. Recent solo exhibitions of his paintings include *After Forking* and *Ed Ecco a Voi* at Josh Lilley in London (2024, 2020) *Shades at Draculas's Revenge* in New York (2023) and *Thermals of the Heart at The Club* in Tokyo (2019). In 2012 he awarded the Casa-Museo Giorgio e Isa De Chirico three Michelin stars for the 'exceptional misterì' of its *Bagni Misteriosi* paintings, as part of the exhibition *D'Après Giorgio*. Hatfull's writing about painting has featured in numerous monographs and catalogues, as well as periodicals including *Frieze*, *Apollo* and *Mousse*. In 2018 he gave the Felicity Powell lecture at the British School at Rome, where he had been the Sainsbury Scholar of Painting and Sculpture in 2011-12. He studied at the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford and the Royal Academy Schools, London.

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CELIA HEMPTON Celia Hempton's (b. 1981, Stroud, UK. Lives and works in London) practice spans painting, performance and installation; contending with the ethics of looking, the consumption of images and the bodily gaze, within the digital sphere in particular. Hempton studied her MA Painting at Royal College of Art, London 2005-2007 and her BA (Hons) Fine Art, Painting, Glasgow School of Art 2000-2003. Recent solo presentations include *Ocean Terminal*, *Flatland Projects*, *Bexhill-on-Sea* (2025); *Transplant*, *Phillida Reid*, London (2024). Selected group exhibitions include *Finding Our Blue Sky*, *Lisson Gallery*, London (2025); *The Living End: Painting and Other Technologies, 1970 – 2020*, *Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago* (2024 – 2025); *British Art Show 9* (touring), *Aberdeen Art Gallery* and *The Box*, *Plymouth* (2021 – 2022).

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JAMES IRWIN PHD (b.1980) is an Artist, PhD researcher at Kingston School of Art, Associate Lecturer at UAL and Digital Media Tutor at the Royal Academy Schools. He works with web technologies, AI systems and digital sound and image to investigate the notion of a vital life force inherent within digital media. He holds an MFA in Computational Studio Arts (Goldsmiths, 2010) and a BA (Hons) in Fine Art (Newcastle University, 2005).

Web projects include: *surfacecollider*, *Oral Publication Edition 11* (2024), and *surfacecollider* (23032020), www.annkakultys.com (2020). Solo exhibitions include: *Listening to Xanax*, *Gossamer Fog*, London (2018) and *Binary Translations*, *Space In Between*, London (2013). Group exhibitions include: *The Terminal: Human Shaped Whole*, *Anonymous Gallery*, New York (2021) and *Terms and Conditions May Apply*, *Annka Kultys Gallery*, London (2018).

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BEN JAMIE (b.1978) Nottingham. Lives and works in London. After studying at the University of Gloucestershire and L'École cantonale d'art du Valais, he went on to complete 2 years at the *Turps Banana Studio* programme. His work, a blend of abstract and figurative elements, has been showcased in galleries both in the UK and internationally, including a prestigious exhibition at *Space K* in Korea. Recent solo shows include *Realm*, *Castor Gallery*, London 2022-23; *Threshold*, *Castor Gallery*, London, UK. And recent group shows include *POST-POST WAR*, *OHS Projects*, London, UK; *There's A Real World Outside*, *AHWNN Gallery*, *Oostende*, Belgium 2022; and *Always Winter*, *Brooke Bennington*, London, UK 2021. His painting '*Dissolver*' was a prizewinner at the *John Moore's Painting Prize* in 2016.

benjamie.co.uk
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YUMI KATAYAMA (b.1955 Tokyo) Lives and works in London. Katayama has studio at Chelsea School of Art; Goldsmiths' College (BA Fine Art); Royal College of Art (MA Printmaking). Showing works in the UK, France and Japan. Recent exhibitions include 2025 Solo show *Gallery O2 Kanazawa*, Japan. 2024 *Greed*, *White Conduit Projects*, London; Japan likes *Pink*, *Gallery O2*, *Kanazawa*, Japan; *Croatian Pavilion*, *Venice Biennale*; *British Art Fair Saatchi Gallery*, London. 2022 *Yumi Katayama Prints, 1998-2015*, *SKLo*, *Kanazawa*, Japan; Recent Paintings, *White Conduit Projects*, London. 2020 *Spring Show*, *Bernard Jacobson Gallery*, London.

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YUN KYUNG JEONG (b.1984 – South Korean. Lives and works in Seoul), holds a Bachelor's degree from the College of Fine Arts at Ewha Womans University, Seoul, KR and a Master of Fine Arts from the Slade School of Fine Art in London, UK. Jeong has showcased her work in solo exhibitions in notable cities including Seoul, Hong Kong, Moscow, and London. She will exhibit her latest pieces at *JARILAGER Gallery* in Cologne in 2025. Her artwork is included in prestigious collections such as the *Tiroche DeLeon Collection*, *OCI Museum of Art*, and the *National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art*, *Art Bank*, Korea. In 2024, she participated in renowned art fairs like *Frieze Seoul*, *Art Basel Hong Kong*, and *Art Abu Dhabi*, with additional exhibitions in Seoul, Copenhagen, and Leipzig.

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CHLOE LE TISSIER (b.1984 Guernsey) Lives and works in South London. Le Tissier studied at the Slade School of Fine Art (BA), the Royal Drawing School (Postgraduate Certificate) and the Turps Offsite Studio programme 21-23. Le Tissier exhibited in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition '23 and '24, and the Ruth Borchard Self-Portrait prize exhibition. A prize-winner in Columbia Threadneedle Prize, Chloe has undertaken residencies at Dumfries House, Scotland and the Royal Drawing School residency in India. Chloe's work is in private collections worldwide.

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@chloe_le_tissier

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SARAH LONGWORTH-WEST (b.1981 London). Grew up Oxfordshire. Lives & works London. MFA Painting, The Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, 2008; BA Fine Art Newcastle University, 2006. Recently selected for; Waverton Art Prize, Barbican Arts Trust Prize, Jackson's International Painting Prize. She wrote for Turps Banana Magazine A/W 24 Issue 29; Interviewed by Priseman & Seabrook collection (2024); has co-authored a paper delivered at Whitworth gallery, Manchester for 'Teaching Painting: how can painting be taught at art schools?'. Exhibitions include: 'Painted Conversations', duo collaboration & exhibition led by researchers at Gray's School of Art, Aberdeen, 'Fully Awake 3:6', Dyson Gallery, London; 'Merge Visible' curated by Charley Peters, Contemporary British Painting, London. Longworth-West is a Senior Lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts.

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SCOTT MCCrackEN (b.1987, Falkirk) is a painter and also occasionally writes about painting and organises exhibitions. He received his BA and MFA at Edinburgh College of Art (2005-11) and studied at Turps Art School (2015-17). His work has been exhibited at Thames-Side Studios, London; OHSH Projects, London; TondoCosmic, London; GalleriHi10, Skien; HilbertRaum, Berlin and Ocean's

Apart, Manchester. In 2017 he was awarded the Darbyshire Prize for Emerging Art and in 2019 he was shortlisted for the Contemporary British Painting Prize. He is Correspondence Course Programme Leader and mentor at Turps Art School, and is a regular contributor to Turps Magazine.

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DAMIEN MEADE (b.1969, Ireland) lives and works in London and Madrid. MA in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Art in 1993. Awarded the Abbey Fellowship in Painting to The British School at Rome in 2018. Recent solo exhibitions include Sid Motion Gallery hosted by Sadie Coles HQ, London (2023), day.01 Gallery, Sydney, (2023), Plus-One Gallery, Antwerp, (2022), CAR Gallery, Bologna, (2022, 2018). Recent group exhibitions include: Italics PANORAMA Monferrato, Italy (2024), WOAW Gallery, Hong Kong (2024), Turps Gallery, London, (2023), Umberto Di Marino Gallery, Naples (2023) Workplace Gallery, London (2022), GAM Museum, Turin (2020), MONA Museum, Australia (2019).

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FAY NICOLSON was born in 1984 in Derby, moving to London to study at CSM (2006) and the RCA (2011). Working with painting, drawing, print and performance, her practice focuses on mediated imagery, tensions between embodiment and disassociation, and the performativity of the documented subject. Solo exhibitions include Dithyramb, Quip and Curiosity, Cambridge (2023); SPA SONGS, Broadway Gallery, Letchworth (2019); UN MAKE ME, Galerie Rolando Anselmi, Berlin (2016); OVER AND OVER PURE FORM, Grand Union, (2015); PLAY SENSE, Gerald Moore Gallery, London (2015). Nicolson has work in public and private collections in the UK, Europe and USA and lectures internationally.

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CHARLEY PETERS PHD (b.1973, Birmingham). PhD Fine Art (Theory and Practice), De Montfort University, 2006. Peters' practice is rooted in studio painting and investigates the intersection of contemporary painting and technology, exploring how screen-based visual culture reshapes our ways of seeing. While grounded in the language of abstraction, her work expands beyond the canvas into large-scale commissions and public art, engaging with architecture and digital aesthetics. She exhibits internationally, with recent shows at Kelly-McKenna Gallery (New Jersey), Hauser & Wirth (London), Yantai Art Museum (Yantai), and the National Museum of Gdansk (Gdansk). Peters has completed commissions for clients including Facebook, London Art Fair, Wembley Park, and Hospital Rooms. Alongside her practice, she is an established academic: currently Head of Graduate School at City & Guilds of London Art School and a PhD supervisor at University of the Arts London.

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SARAH POOTS (b. 1982 N. Ireland) is an artist based in Nottingham. She graduated from Glasgow School of Art, 2005; The Royal Academy Schools, London, 2010 and studied at the HGB Academy Leipzig, Germany in 2008. Poots has exhibited extensively in the UK and Ireland. Recently she has exhibited in the group show Ordinary Things, Workplace, London 2025; a solo presentation Placeholder, curated by Kristin Day, Weekday Cross, Nottingham 2024; Pourquoi London, a group show curated by Gertrude London and Canopy Collections situated an historic building in Spitalfields, London, 2024. She has had solo shows at the CCA, Londonderry and Andor London in 2015.

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@sarah_poots

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LORNA ROBERTSON (b. 1967 Ayr, Scotland). She studied at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee (1986-1991) and currently lives and works in Glasgow. She has had recent solo exhibitions at Alison Jacques, London (2024) and Ingleby gallery, Edinburgh (2022). "My paintings" Robertson says "sit somewhere between abstraction and figuration, a tangled game of hide- and- seek that plays with the visibility and readability of an image. I often paint to find out what to paint, creating harmonies and tensions through placement of shape, specificity of colour – the process itself becoming an act of revealing".

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CARL ROWE (b. 1962). MA Fine Art, Manchester Polytechnic 1985. Lives and works in the East of England. In addition to studio production, he works on public art initiatives including billboards, print portfolios and commissions, and is a part-time Senior Research Fellow at Norwich University of the Arts. Rowe has engaged with creative and academic projects in UK and numerous other countries. Recent projects have been devised for the charity Hospital Rooms, HMP Norwich, Clear Channel, Norfolk and Suffolk Secure & Forensic Services and The Restoration Trust. Rowe is a member of OUTPOST gallery, East Anglia Art Fund, and the Printmakers Council.

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SARAH RYDER (b. 1978, Wales) lives and works in North Wales. MFA Painting, Slade School of Fine Art, London, 2008; BA in Fine Art Painting at the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, 2000.

Recent solo exhibitions Imperceivable (until it isn't), Isotop Fellesatelier, Bergen, 2024; Feet. Brain. Back Again. Galeri, Caernarfon, and Cass Art Gallery, Manchester, 2022. Recent group exhibitions: Caught In The Act, Royal Society of Sculptors, London, 2024; PLAY: The Movie!, Ty Pawb, Wrexham, 2023; BLINK Room Share 4, Safehouse 1,

London, 2023; Maquette, No Show Space, London, 2023; Exeter Contemporary Open, Exeter Phoenix, Devon, 2022.

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ALAENA TURNER PHD (b. 1984) completed an MA in Painting at Slade School of Fine Art (2008) and a BA in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Art and Design (2006). In 2013 she was awarded the position of Honorary Research Fellow of the Materials Research Project of Slade School of Fine Art. Between 2015-19 she completed a practice-based PhD at the University of Leeds funded by an AHRC scholarship. She has exhibited across the UK and Europe and received the APT Curatorial Fellowship in 2016 for her collaborative project 'Ingredients, Methods, Serving Suggestion'. Alaena Turner is a Senior Lecturer on the 2D Pathway of BA Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, UAL.

cargocollective.com/alaenaturner

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BEN WESTOBY (b. 1984) is a London-based artist working in painting and sculpture. Initially trained in photography, his work explores abstraction through order and repetition, making images through a process of reduction and reorganisation. Westoby's work has been exhibited internationally, including at Xxijra Hii, London; St. Chads, London; Tube Gallery, Mallorca; and Contemporary Sculpture Fulmer. He holds an MA in Fine Art Photography from the Royal College of Art and a BA in Photography from the University of Brighton.

benwestoby.com
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MĂDĂLINA ZAHARIA (b. 1985, Sighetu Marmatiei) is a Romanian visual artist and filmmaker who lives and works in London. She was a 2023 fellow in residence at Akademie Schloss Solitude and her films have been included in the official selection of the BFI London Film Festival, Aesthetica Film Festival (York), Bucharest Experimental Film Festival, GRRL HAUS CINEMA (Boston and Berlin), Tourne-

Films Festival Lausanne and many more. Recent exhibitions include: Variables as Absence of Uniformity, Wetterling Gallery, Stockholm 2024; I will not be sad in this world, film lounge 2023, Sehnsal, Vienna; Inventory of the Week, Sala Omnia, The National Center for Dance Bucharest 2023; PULS 22, The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest 2023;

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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE;

**NEW CULTURAL PRODUCTION AND ADVANCEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE
WITHIN THE FIELD OF PAINTING.**

The term 'Flat Volume' in itself is my original concept. The selection of the invited artists under its concept. Installed works together in this location.

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**I WOULD LIKE TO PERSONALLY PAY THANKS TO A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO
AIDED THIS PROJECT INTO REALITY.**

To my colleagues at Norwich University of the Arts who have aided the progression of this exhibition project, publication and symposium in various ways including the support of a twelve week Research Sabbatical for 'Flat Volume'; Professor Louis Nixon, Hannah Bedford, Dr Sarah Horton, Professor Krzysztof Fijalkowski, Professor Richard Sawdon Smith, Craig Barber and Dr Desmond Brett.

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Hannah Barry for the generous loans of Stevie Dix and Mohammed Qasim Ashfaq's work.

Phyllida Reid for the generous loan of Celia Hempton's work.

Symposium contributing artists and invited expert; Inga Fraser (Paul Nash).

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