IPA

IN THE END WE ARE ALL ALONE

17 MARCH - 22 APRIL 2016

BARTHOLOMEW BEAL

PAUL BENNEY

JIMIN CHAE

GUY HADDON-GRANT

GUILLEMETTE MONCHY

DORTE KLOPPENBORG SKRUMSAGER

Currated by Jason Colchin-Carter & Becca Pelly-Fry

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"We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone.
Only through our love and friendship
can we create the illusion for the moment that
we're not alone."

Orson Welles

IN THE END WE ARE ALL ALONE

IPA Group Show at the Griffin Gallery
March 16 - April 22

Jason Colchin-Carter

It is with great pleasure we open our new Group show on March 16th at Griffin Gallery. Co-curated by Becca Pelly-Fry and Jason Colchin-Carter.

The Artists exhibiting emanate from the stable of I.P. Arts represented Talent. Namely: - Bartholomew Beal, Paul Benney, Jimin Chae, Guy Haddon-Grant, Dorte Kloppenborg Skrumsager, & Guillemette Monchy.

The show depicts a dialogue between the artists, their mediums, and the concepts of solitude, finality, & melancholy. The selected Artists create art that makes the viewer feel deeply and react viscerally.

This exhibition clearly displays I.P. Arts ethos of firmly supporting & championing the resurgence of traditional skills like drawing, and painting. Our aims are to explore the eternal search for the nature of humanity and meaning in our daily lives, and to showcase Art that continually inspires and motivates.

Our Clients, Collectors, and Curators remain continually interested in supporting our Intent and our Program. Over the last 3 years the demand for our Program, Curation, and the Artists represented by IPA, has gained international momentum, and we are now active in many overseas markets.

We look forward to welcoming you to experience this Exhibition.

Video, photo, Essays, and other PR/ Press materials available upon request.

office@isisphoenixarts.com

"In the end we are all alone"' is a quote by Orson Wells from his era defining biopic Citizen Kane.

Becca Pelly-Fry

Head Curator, Griffin Gallery & ColArt International

When Jason approached me two years ago with a proposal to work together, I was immediately struck by both his commitment to young artists and his eye for interesting contemporary figurative work. With a recent resurgence in figurative painting and our particular interest in supporting emerging talent, IP Arts and Griffin Gallery seemed like a natural partnership.

The artists in this exhibition are ambitious, technically adept and united by an interest in the human condition. The work, when seen together, sparks a series of interesting conversations that seem to circle around the search for meaning within our daily lives. They explore what it feels like to occupy space; to be physically present within the world, close to other people and yet isolated by our own thoughts and feelings. Whilst this might at first seem a colourful and uplifting show, each artist delves deep into the human psyche, asking questions that we might not feel entirely comfortable addressing. It is this tension that interests me, and it briefly binds artists and curators together in a united quest.

Griffin Gallery, supported by fine art material brands Winsor & Newton, Liquitex and Conté à Paris, specialises in supporting and promoting emerging artists from around the world, through an annual programme of curated exhibitions and artist residencies. We have a particular interest in the use of materials and the question of materiality in contemporary art practice; our programme aims to encourage dialogue around these issues.

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IN THE END WE ARE ALL ALONE

Nico Kos Earle
February 1, 2016

IPA Group Show at the Griffin Gallery co-curated by Jason Colchin Carter and Becca Pelly-Fry

'*In the end we are all alone*,' is a quote by Orson Wells from his era defining biopic Citizen Kane. It's a deliciously enigmatic title for a group show, one that unites those singular, melancholy concepts - end, alone - with inclusive universals: we all. This conceit engenders a second reading and offers us a clue as to how we might approach the works in this show. It speaks of duality: although the inevitable conclusion of this mortal coil is unknowable, it is our common destiny, one we are invited to share. It could be likened to the act of creation, often solitary and difficult, and yet what it produces transcends time altogether. A work of art lives on in the seeing and the sharing. In this context, the show's title is not as dissonant as it first appears. This feeling of being 'alone' activates our search for meaning, and satisfies the desire 'we all' have to find respite in the lasting materiality of exceptional works of art, where the artists presence is still manifest.

"Both myself and Becca Pelly-Fry share a love of art work that makes you feel deeply and react viscerally – so we decided on this title as a means to explore the nature of humanity and the eternal search for meaning in our daily lives," says Jason Colchin-Carter Director of IPA who co-curated the show with Becca Pelly-Fry.

This is the first of two annual group shows in 2016 curated by Colchin-Carter with Isis Phoenix Arts. It promises a budding spring of fresh works set to spark our imaginations; generous works that leave ample room for contemplation and individual interpretation. Like musical prodigies, these artists have been chosen for their capacity to reinterpret traditional mediums and techniques in unexpected ways: Paul Benny, Bartholomew Beal, Jimin Chea, Guillemette Monchy, Dorte Kloppenborg Scrummager and Guy Hadden Grant. Each artist displays a unique and sophisticated approach to their chosen medium, whilst their work conveys narrative content or recurring tropes that seem vaguely familiar. This combination gently initiates us into original ways of seeing. This is an international collective that screams zeitgeist, brought together by a visionary art agency with Colchin-Carter at the helm who, like Simco (Stefan Simchowitz) in the US, is changing the status quo and giving collectors access to some of the brightest rising stars of this generation.

"I see the resurgence of traditional skills like drawing, painting and sculpting as a reaction to the YBA's turning 50. They are now BA's and still very relevant, but artists like (Bartholomew) Beal or (Jimin) Chae seem to really strike a chord with collectors looking for something new, where the hand of the artist is really palpable," says Colchin-Carter.

It is a welcome tonic to the mechanical and deliberately impersonal Postmodernism that dominated the turn of the century in contemporary galleries and museums. Narrative painting was seen as a hangover of the Victorian era, but over the past decades artists like John Currin and Neo Rauch have explored the role of narrative again in fresh and compelling ways, whilst major exhibitions including two pre-Raphaelite shows in 2016, signal a sea change in attitudes.

"With a few obvious exceptions—Pop Art, Photo Realism and artists such as David Hockney—representational or figurative art was largely considered a thing of the past by the end of the 20th century. But in recent years, a number of contemporary painters have begun reaching back to the roots of modern art to find new modes of expression. They are mixing the human figure and other recognizable forms with elements of abstraction and ambiguous narrative in ways not seen before." says By Paul Trachtman in his article Back to the Figure in the Smithsonian Magazine

It might be tempting to try and categorize these works into a movement such as Neo-Expressionism to which some of the group like Paul Benney are associated, but that would be missing the point. Collectively this IPA show is asking us to reevaluate our relationship to artists who are transforming and advancing the use of traditional mediums and genres, as they conjure up whole new worlds of possibility at their finger tips. A narrative may be embedded in these works, but they are also a psychic configuration of things that do not have visual representation, of a place beyond words. Yes we are alone in death, but some of us choose to shine brightly whilst we live in a myriad of unexpected, inexplicable and profoundly moving ways.

Paul Benney is best known for brooding depictions of lonely figures lost in a stygian world, punctuated by flashes of white light. An original member of the Neo-Expressionist group formed in the early 80s New York East Village, he uses complexity and ambiguity to challenge our interpretation of the visual narrative. In the forward to his monograph *Night Painting*, Rachel Campbell Johnson says, *"Benney paints figures, whilst their meanings can never be quite fixed, embody some sense of our spiritual quest… The landscape is similarly transformed. He may be painting natural phenomena…but their delicate beauty keys in to our sense of an extra dimension."*

Represented in public and private collections around the world including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the National Gallery, Australia, and The National Portrait Gallery, London, with a recent solo show at Serena Morton Gallery, Benney is also one of the UK's leading portrait artists. His growing list of prominent cultural and political patrons includes almost every member of the Ghetty Family.

"Benney's recent portrait of Balthazar Getty is a very contemporary take on the classic portrait; the subject casually dressed and sitting on a stool with pale green backdrop," says Colchin-Carter. For this show we have commissioned his second largest studio work, a vast 14 x 8 ft painting, after his Talking Tongues which was inspired by Goya's famous painting, all of the subjects have flames coming out of the top of their heads. The new work will have a large single figure and whirlpools with flames"

Like other great narrative painters, DiBenedetto or Angela Dufresne, Benney uses obscurity and historical reference to engage us in a compelling visual narrative. *"We approach with a strange sense of déjà vu. We have walked these places before. They belong to the lands inside our heads,"* Say Campbell Johnson and she might be referencing a number of artists in this show.

Fresh from his second sell out solo show at the FAS New Bond Street.**Bartholomew Beal's** tableaus, executed in a vivid and dynamic color palette, illustrate half-formed spaces that reference both the theatre of literary history and the real world's ever evolving stage. Just like windows, they reveal powerful interior scenes whilst reflecting the viewer therein, leaving elements unfinished for our minds to complete the picture. IP Arts exclusively represents Beal choosing to Collaborate with Galleries. Despite his youth - Beal is only 26 - his natural ability allows him to tackle weighty themes of our human experience, whilst also questioning how this particular screen based society is evolving. With oblique references to virtual windows on the worldwide web through floating panes of translucent colour, he frequently anchors his pieces on the crumpled face of a bearded old man who might be God or King Lear - a fiction or reality. This is not a screen friendly face. Moving seamlessly between the tight exactitude of representational forms and the loose and emotive brushworks of abstraction and color fields, Beal often conceals figures in his work, painting over the ghosts of his own progress.

"Whilst his subjects might be melancholy, his colors are bright and uplifting and he gives the viewer room to make the connection between his literary references and pressing social issues we face today, such as the refugee crisis. We are so excited about his work for this show which includes his first extra large diptych of 240cm X 180cm."

In compliment to Beal's extraordinary dexterity is **Jimin Chae**, a Graduate of Chelsea from South Korea. The youngest artist in the exhibition, Chae first caught Colchin-Carter's eye with a bold triptych executed in Hockneyesque in blocks of colour. Returning from a residency in New York, he currently works from his studio South Korea. *"Creating 8 new pieces for this show over the last twelve months, his first triptych which will be on display in a private viewing room so collectors can experience his work at this scale,"* says Colchin-Carter. Layering flat bright elements drawn from interiors and the bold outlines of architecture, his work offers us glimpses into an alternative reality held together in a careful, sometimes precarious, balance.

Speaking of precarious, Colchin-Carter signed **Guillemette Monchy** on the day bombs went off throughout Paris in November 2015. From her studio in the north of Paris, Monchy's practice is centered on mixed media drawings and gouache. These work are ethereal in quality, but quietly charged with the tension that exists between art and reality - a line which is constantly, sometimes dangerously, blurred. Her image source is an expanding and interconnected web of family photos, internet screen shots, classic films and the vestiges of fading memory, which she curates and collates in a form of virtual self-portraiture. She is the author of what she chooses to represent or obscure, oscillating between fact and fiction, imagined and real, and never quite reveals her hand. "Again there is this sense with Monchy's work that nothing is entirely what it seems, and so we are engaged in the search with her. For this show she has taken inspiration from classic French cinema from the 40s and 50s."

Transitioning us into the three dimensional, is the sculptor **Dorte Kloppenborg Scrumsager**, who has been working with IPA for three and a half years. "The title *Saligia + 1* is Latin for Seven Deadly Sins + 1, so I call it the *8 Deadly Sins*. We are showing four complete sets of the *8 Deadly Sins* - 32 hand made pieces in total." Working in clay, Dorte then uses the lost wax casting method to translate her pieces into bronze, which she then polishes using the finest grade sand paper. They are beguiling, mellifluous, and call to mind the biomorphic shapes of great 20th century sculptors like Barbara Hepworth and Bridget McCrum, and yet there is more. With Bacon-like mouths and body parts, the viewer is invited to match each piece with its requisite deadly sin, with the eighth being left entirely open to interpretation.

"The whole fun in this series, and the reason why Dorte hooked me 30 seconds into the pitch, is that it is so culturally inclusive. Everyone will have their own idea of how the shapes relate to the sins and what the eighth one could be," enthuses Colchin-Carter.

With not a flat surface in sight, these sculptures also act as mirrors - parts of your face reflected and refracted therein. This highly polished finish is indicative of how contemporary artists can harness technical innovations to advance their own practice.

On this point Dorte collaborated with IPA to design and patent a hinge mechanism that gives the collector the option to tilt and position either floor or wall mount each piece. "Not wanting to limit our collectors we created that option!" says Colchin-Carter giving us an insight into the wonderful symbiotic relationship he facilitates between artist and collector.

Guy Haddon-Grant's bronze series *The Pleasure and Terror of Levitation*, has also been curated for this show. A graduate of Camberwell Collage, Haddon-Grant manages Nicola Hicks studio and alongside his own sculptural practice which often includes drawing, calling to mind the work of Jenny Saville. Fastidious in his research, his studio is a rich seam of ancient and historical studies that reaches all the way back to the earliest expressions in cave paintings.

This showstopper captures the undulating wave of articulating arms mimicking flight across 13 scale bronze torsos set into a 180cm plinth. "The reason I love this work so much is that although there are 13 pieces, Grant has created them on a very intimate scale with multiple points of perspective. If you stand in front of the piece you only see one torso lifting its arms gracefully like a dancer, but from the side they are all alone…"

IN THE END WE ARE ALL ALONE

- and so is the spectator

Edward Lucie-Smith

It can't, now, be much of a secret that the whole idea of 'avant-gardism', as it was once constructed by experimental artists, and by the curators and critics who followed in their wake, has long been in trouble. In fact the whole thing probably lay down and died in the 1970s, nearly half-a-century ago. Suitably enough, its obsequies were conducted by two related art movements, Minimalism and Conceptual Art. These tended, in their different ways, to tell aficionados of contemporary art: "Look, baby, there's really nothing here any more. If you want to be up-to-the-minute, nothing is what you get."

For powerful commercial, as well as purely psychological reasons, the art world needed to find ways to go on. The commercial reason was, paradoxically, the inexorable growth of public collections, which continued to remove the major works of art made in the pre-Modern past from the market, and which, indeed was also doing much the same thing to the major works inherited recently from the giants of the 21st century Modern Movement, most of whom were now dead. The only way for the financial mechanism to survive was for artists to continue to make art and for dealers to find ways to sell it. Art and capitalism were intimately intertwined, and had been so since at least the days of the Dutch picture-merchants of the 17th century.

In addition, there was an increasing tendency for contemporary culture to lose its grip on the past – to find difficulty in connecting with the mind-set of earlier societies. To quote the opening sentence of L.P. Hartley's novel The Go-Between: "The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there." That book was published as long ago as 1953, but is now best remembered for the 1971 film derived from it, with a script by Harold Pinter. The timing was apposite – the film was released just at the moment when programmatic Modernism, as it had been defined for the whole of the 20th century, was pushed into limbo.

The art situation we are in today is often described as Post Modern. That is, contemporary artists are busy making art best described by two words that tell us what it is *not*. By definition, it isn't really Modernist in the old sense.

One of the consequences, intended or unintended, is that contemporary artists have been cut loose from any kind of stylistic framework. To quote another half-forgotten and in this case distinctly dodgy figure, the would-be magus Aleister Crowley: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

None of the artists represented in this show closely resembles any of the others. It does not represent any easily definable stylistic tendency. Though the exhibition is being held in London, now the acknowledged capital of the 20th century art world, they are not all of them based here, though the majority of them work here. One the Korean Jimin Chae, works here only part time, moving between Seoul, London and New York.

One of the few things they have in common – something obvious, but nothing to do with any sort of stylistic reference - is their relationship to IsisPhoenixArts, the organization that promotes and represents their work. IsisPhoenixArts has no fixed gallery space of its own, either in London or elsewhere. It co-operates with a wide variety of other organizations, in this instance with the well respected Griffin Gallery, already known for its interest in presenting and promoting young artists, to put new departures in art before the public. The artists included are very much part of the way the ever-resilient market continues to develop. The hierarchical model proposed by official institutions is still being fiercely resisted.

Perhaps the most important thing they have in common artistically is a paradox – the sense of 'aloneness' that is summarized in the title given to this show. Each of them gives the impression that he or she has embarked on a voyage of exploration, with no known end, no conclusion in sight. Where painting and mixed media work are concerned there is, for example, often a fascination with spatial dislocation. The world portrayed has a resemblance to the world of everyday perception, but it is nevertheless one where space slips and slides in a way that is disorienting to the spectator.

Where sculpture is concerned, there are references to familiar forms – the appearance of the human head and the human body – but these forms seem to be in a state of perpetual transformation.

One of the striking things that the Modern Movement in art accomplished, both for good and for ill, was the abolition of all the long established frameworks of comparison. That is, from the Renaissance onwards, it had been possible to judge the quality of a work of art, in part at least, by its faithfulness to what the artist had perceived in the external world. Artists achieved a greater and greater command of different kinds of representation – the representation of what was three dimensional on a flat surface, the representation of human proportions in a way that seemed convincing when the art work was compared to what existed in 'reality', so called. The criticism of art, as it developed from Vasari's time onwards, was largely founded on greater and greater elaborations of the comparative method. This work of art seems superior to that one, when we put the two of them side by side.

Just at the moment when Modernism in art was overthrowing this long-established methodology, its life was prolonged by the emergence of the fully illustrated art book as an instrument of cultural instruction. We tend, today, to forget how short the dominance of the fully illustrated mass-market art book actually was. It didn't achieve pre-eminence until after World War II. It is now starting to wither away thanks to the success of the Internet. At the same time, hierarchical models for presenting and evaluating contemporary art, as favored, for example by official museums and their slow moving curatorial committees, look increasingly cumbersome and outmoded.

In my own mind, as a writer of art books, I tend to associate this trajectory with the kind of challenge to agreed stylistic categories and established ways of looking at the world that one finds displayed here. The artists shown are struggling to orient themselves in a world where visual imagery is increasingly fluid. Their virtue is that, each of them in his or her own completely individual way, nevertheless struggles to engage the spectator. Thanks to this struggle, their work continues to evolve as we look at it. Our relationship to what they present us with is never static, always dynamic. The artists' cure for their aloneness is to ally themselves with ours, with our own uncertainty about where this supposedly Post Modern world is taking us.

BARTHOLOMEW BEAL

Bartholomew Beal has chosen to base the images for his new exhibition on one of Shakespeare's greatest plays – King Lear, first known to have been performed on St Stephen's Day (26 December) 1606, at Whitehall, before King James I and his court. It was also first published in that year, with two other, somewhat different versions to follow: a Second Quarto in 1619, and an appearance in the First Folio, published in 1623. For much of its early life in the theatre it was not seen in the version or versions based on the original text or texts, but in a much altered version by Nahum Tate, which was provided with a happy ending.

In the years of George III's madness, from 1811 to 1820, it was not performed at all, as the subject matter was considered to be too controversial. The only two major professional theatres then active in London both presented productions in 1820, within three months of the king's death. The great tragedian Edmund Kean played King Lear, using the original text, in 1823, but this failed, and after only three performances Kean reverted to Tate's softened version. The original did not full re-establish itself until another great tragedian, William Macready, presented it at Covent Garden in 1838. Since then the play has been regularly performed, always according to the theatrical conventions of the time.

Even with the tragic ending restored, the great actor-managers of the 19th century continued to show comparatively little respect for the playwright's intentions. They invariably cut the text heavily. In 1892, Henry Irving's version, with the strong emphasis on pictorial spectacle common in the theatre at that time, before filmmakers showed that they could always out-do live theatre in this respect, cut 46% of the text. There was still, too, a certain squeamishness about the more brutal aspects of the play. Irving, for example, cut the scene with the blinding of Gloucester.

The rise of 'literary' painting, from the mid-18th century onwards, and the already existing emphasis on narrative in European art, meant that artists, already attracted to mythological and Biblical scenes, and accustomed to depicting them, began to turn to Shakespeare for subject-matter.

This was particularly true, inevitably, of artists who had English as their first language. Two major figures in the early Sturm und Drang period of the Romantic Movement, Benjamin West (1738-1820) and James Barry, (1741-1806) both painted ambitious compositions based on the play. In both cases the emphasis was on Lear's relationship with his youngest daughter Cordelia.

This emphasis continued throughout the 19th century. A number of members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood made paintings illustrating scenes from King Lear. Among them were Ford Madox Brown and John Everett Millais. Ford Madox Brown's painting Cordelia's Portion had a strong influence on the designs made for Irving's 1892 production.

Throughout this period of King Lear's popularity as subject-matter for artists, the focus was always on Lear's relationship with his daughter Cordelia. Very few artists ventured elsewhere, though there is a striking painting of King Lear and the Fool in the Storm by William Dyce (1806-1864), who came from a generation slightly earlier than that of the Pre-Raphaelites. This, however, is something of an exception to the rule.

It is possible to see this focus on Cordelia as being part of the Victorians slightly creepy fascination with virginal young women, especially when seen in relationships with much older men.

The atmosphere of Bartholomew Beal's suite of paintings inspired by one of Shakespeare's greatest plays is very different from that evoked by the much more literal 18th and 19th century images that I have just cited. The constantly recurring images are, yes, that of Lear himself, but also that of Lear's Fool, who is presented as being in some way Lear's alter ego.

To complicate matters further, he is also, it seems, the alter ego of the absent Cordelia. This is in line with a modern theory that Cordelia (played by a boy according to the conventions of Jacobean theatre) and the Fool were both played by a single young actor, who doubled the two roles. The figure in the little head-and-shoulders painting entitled Much pined away is clearly androgynous, though the quotation applies only to the Fool, pining because, at this point in the play, Cordelia is absent.

A much older version of the Fool appears in a larger painting called Little world of man, where he and his royal master seem like twins of the two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon – protagonists in a much later drama, Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot. In this it is Estragon who suggests 'Let's hang ourselves immediately,' and Vladimir who replies, a moment or two later, 'You're my only hope.' Then, quite soon after, there comes a further exchange:

ESTRAGON: We don't manage too badly, eh Didi, between the two of us?

VLADIMIR: Yes yes. Come on, we'll try the left first.

ESTRAGON: We always find something, eh Didi, to give us the impression we exist?

VLADIMIR: (impatiently) Yes yes, we're magicians.

The dialogue makes one think of an even crisper exchange, not between Lear and his Fool, but between two concerned spectators observing their interaction:

KENT: But who is with him?

GENTLEMAN: None but the fool; who labours to out-jest

His heart-struck injuries.

The fact is that Beal's paintings based on King Lear are not narrative in the sense that either Victorian theatregoers, or Victorian enthusiasts for Pre-Raphaelite art, would have understood that term. They are the visual equivalent of an echo-chamber – they represent the way in which the experience of studying Shakespeare's text has created a series of echoes and re-echoes in the artist's head. In this sense they are closely related to Bartholomew Beal's series loosely based onT.S. Eliot's The Waste Land, previously exhibited in this gallery.

From this, they mark a step forward, since they are consistently more ambitious and more complex, in keeping with the grandeur of the play. They do nonetheless have several things strikingly in common. One is a set of purely technical characteristics: for example, they often leave certain things to be filled in by the spectator. The paintings are in a state of movement as one looks at them – they seem to be evolving in front of one's eyes. Look. Turn away. Look again. At this second glance, the image is somehow different.

The other is the pervasive sense of irony, always present in The Waste Land, but perhaps more deeply buried in King Lear (where the Victorians pretty certainly failed to find it). It is not for nothing that the exhibition is entitled This Great Stage of Fools. That is a comment that applies not so much to the world that Shakespeare has imagined, but more directly to our own day.

One particularly significant painting seems, at first sight, to have little or nothing to do with what one finds in the play. The title is This feather stirs, and it comes from a late moment in the play. Cordelia is dead, but Lear, holding her in his arms, refuses to believe it:

> This feather stirs; she lives! If it be so,
> It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
> That ever I have felt.

What the painting offers is simply a pair of hands, each holding a string, each string cut off at the lower margin. This is the puppet-master at work, controlling the destinies of men – who remain unaware of their inability to do or say anything than other than what the master commands.

There are in fact two dominant sets of imagery in this series of paintings. One is to do with the idea of the Fool as the true hero of the play, rather than the King. Yet there is a consolatory element as well – the presence of nature, the background against which the tragedy of the clown is played out. Sweeten my imagination shows Lear, flowers and leaves in his hair, conversing with a wren perched on his hand. Yet the text of the play once again contradicts what is shown in the painting:

There's hell, there's darkness, there's the sulphurous pit, Burning, scalding, stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's money for thee.

It is the oscillation of moods and images that gives these paintings their fascination and their strength. They make one look, and once one has looked, they have a tenacious hold on one's imagination.

Lear's final enigmatic words in the play are, fittingly for an exhibition, 'Look there, look there'. What does he see?

Robert Clark - BARTHOLOMEW BEAL

"We know now that dreaming is a biological necessity. I think that's something that artists do – they dream, for other people."
William Burroughs

For such a young artist Bartholomew Beal dares to tackle an age-old creative quandary: how to make paintings based on, or inspired by, stories? Throughout the 20th century the formalist dictates of Modernism meant that any paintings inflected or infected by literary narrative tended to be dismissed as mere illustration. Yet, looking back through history, we are reminded that the majority of groundbreaking paintings tend to have been initially driven by religious, mythological, social or political tales. Think of Matthias Grünewald's 1516 *Esenheim Crucifixion* or Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* from 1937, two of the most powerfully affecting images of all time in any medium.

And there is a further problem to be tackled by this intrepid young artist: how can painting, which is unavoidably influenced or informed by the photographic and digital imagery that is so ubiquitous in our early 21st century, retain and reaffirm its own creative integrity? Looking at Beal's recent paintings one can understandably recognise visual echoes of the work of artists who have most successfully struggled with this essential question: major figures such as Francis Bacon, Michael Andrews and Gerhard Richter. Whilst it would be ludicrously premature to suggest Beal's achievements are comparable to the work of such luminaries, it is a measure of his creative seriousness, adventurousness and ambition that, to address his work adequately, it is f ully relevant to outline such critical historical lines of figurative painting.

The stories that interest Beal are many but the writings of Samuel Beckett, and more specifically his play of Existentialist deadlock and dread *Endgame*, appear to have been most particularly inspiring. Whilst Beckett's narratives, like all stories, move and develop through time, they don't tend to go very far (at least in the traditional sense of plot development). In fact *Endgame*, like much in Beckett, tends to loop back on itself in a nervous trajectory of self-questioning and self-doubt. The central characters Nagg and Nell are held stationary by dwelling in a couple of ashbins. The narrative sense of uncertainty and suspense is deepened of course by the overwhelming atmosphere of absurd futility built up throughout Beckett's masterful dialogues. Beckett's texts might move us by moving through time but these are stories that tend to be most emotionally affecting when conveyed through instances of petrified tableaux. And as such one can fully appreciate why they have served so well as an at least temporary focus of Beal's concerns.

Beal's decidedly grim-countenanced clowns are less pantheistic tricksters than paradoxical tragedians. They'd belong more in a David Lynch film than a Walt Disney. The implied story is effectively held in check, the laughter choked on. Their red noses and face paint begin to suggest the blush of embarrassment and bruise of suffering as much as drunken revelry. The ultimate joke of the Theatre of the Absurd of course is the fact of mortality, our common bodily vulnerability, the ultimate end to the whole game and story.

Beal's engagement with the biennial Jonathan Vickers Fine Art Award residency, based as it has been in the Derbyshire area, has provided him, through research largely carried out at the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site, with a cast of more specifically defined characters (somewhat eccentric if not all clownish) that has seemingly deepened the play of his creative game. Here a series of recent clownish heads appear to be informed by an historical record of a local civic punishment long ago publicly meted out whereby disobedient workers were forfeited a week's pay for, amongst other misdemeanors, "being off drinking, idleness and looking through windows, putting Josh Haynes' dog in a bucket of hot water and … rubbing their faces with blood and going about the town to frighten people." There are other recruits to Beal's cast of local characters. One Sammy Ashton, born around Belper in 1823, graduated from a career as a nail maker to become a far from financially successful travelling showman, replete with stove pipe hat and a menagerie of rats, mice, hawks, owls and his best friend pet monkey. Elsewhere Beal's *Alice in the Bacon Box* is a portrait of a legendary resident of nearby Little Eaton who, between 1891 and 1911, lived in a bacon box donated by the local butcher.

Beal rescues such intriguing yet largely forgotten figures and affords them, through the manner of his painted portraits, a sense of worthy historical grandeur. Alice for instance is situated towards the very bottom of the canvas, as is fitting to her lowly status, but also dead centre, surrounded by her possessions, no matter how meagre, thus she is nevertheless afforded a focus and standing more traditionally reserved for nobility. Beal's highly selective use of sets and accompanying props, by the way, also takes its cue from absurdist theatre: spookily suspended lamp shades, lampposts to lean on, model houses perched upon stilts, sightless sunglasses. Beal's are psycho-portraits. As there is never any pretence that Beckett's protagonists are real individual people, Beal rescues his antiheroes from the archives of local history and imbues them with a presence of psychological iconography. Sammy and Alice are pictured as survivors despite all the odds, humble and unknowing figureheads of Existentialist defiance.

As to the matter of Beal's painterly command, it seems to me it is growing in confidence from painting to painting. Its recognition of the unavoidable usefulness of photographic references is becoming more and more embodied in a self-confident painterly physicality. The lineaments of a facial feature for instance, whilst retaining a set of references to recognizable figurative likeness, tend to be more filled out and enlivened by the stuff of the paint: its malleability, fluidity, its textural sheen and tactile stickiness, the lyrical play of one colour against another, the compositional tension as an organic bodily detail abuts the manufactured rigidity of architecture and furniture.

Such an increasing control of aesthetic and compositional technique is noticeable in *Saint Mondays*, a recent painting that eschews the portrait tradition entirely in favour of a more dramatic metaphorical scenario. Once again, to answer the residency remit, Beal has based this work on a story from local history. Apparently Saint Mondays was the term commonly given to periods of recovery from bouts of excessive drinking, public carousing and, occasionally boozed-up pitched battles between the Belper nailers and the Irish navvies brought in to build George Stephenson's locally engineered railway. Here the suggestive movement of the play of paint, the gestural brushwork and dance of barely recognisable fragments, is foregrounded more than the narrative movement of the story. The presence of the paint starts to become almost self-sufficient. The forms are evocative more than descriptive. Those flailing detached limbs do not literally picture the features of a slaughter as much as suggest the pain, tension and release of the confrontation.
One more historical reference is necessary in elucidating the creative context of Bartholomew Beal's residency work and that is the renowned painter Joseph Wright of Derby (1734 – 1797), who, up until the arrival of the maverick Ian Breakwell on the scene a couple of centuries later, has constituted Derbyshire's major contribution to international art history. Beal acknowledges Wright's *Experiment With An Air Pump*, in London's National Gallery, as a significant early influence. Two of Wright's other unforgettable images, *The Orrery* and *The Alchemist*, form centre-pieces of Derby Art Gallery's permanent collection. In these three muted dramas, so meticulously staged, posed and lit, Wright, working at the very beginning of our modern industrial age, conjured up moments of exquisite suspense and cultural uncertainty. It's an uncertainty of which we are all too painfully and crucially aware today, of course. Indeed we are arguably living through a period of greater cultural uncertainty than ever before in the history of

the human race. Yet uncertainty by its very nature, can be as deeply exciting as it is undeniably daunting. It's to Bartholomew Beal's credit that he has picked up on this uncertainty and begun convincingly to delve into its mysteries in images of increasing enigmatic intrigue.

Robert Clark
Robert Clark is a Reader in Fine Art at the University of Derby, an arts writer for The Guardian, and, under the name Robert Casselton Clark, an artist.

Edward Lucie- Smith
BARTHOLOMEW BEAL -'A Heap of Broken Images'

Bartholomew Beal is a leading member of a fascinating new generation of artists. He represents a number of things that give one hope for the notion of an 'avant-garde' in the visual arts, at a time when what professes to be avant-garde, and is supported as such by our great official institutions, seems increasingly confused and stultified – uncertain about where to go or what to do next.

Let me enumerate some of the things that make his work – to me at least – particularly interesting. First, very obviously, there is the emphasis on the visual, the pleasure of the eye. In contemporary circumstances, artistic developments seems to offer a rhythmic oscillation between two poles; what is visual, often to the apparent exclusion of any kind of intellectual content; and what is conceptual – a mere diagram or statement, intended to make us think rather than actually enjoy what we are looking at. There has also, increasingly been an oscillation between what is material – things made of stuff (though often not of the kind of stuff we expect an art work to be made of) – and the aggressively immaterial.

The last time there was much emphasis on painting, as a dominant medium of avant-garde expression, was in during the rise of the Neo-Expressionist movement in the late 1970s, which culminated in the controversial A New Spirit in Painting exhibition held at the Royal Academy in 1981. Beal's work is much subtler than the rather hectoring art produced at that time, which was rapidly superseded by the various experiments initiated by the YBAs (Younger British Artists), culminating in the survey show Sensation! which took the R.A. by storm in 1997. Now the YBAs have moved into their middle, one might almost say their menopausal years, and once again it is time for something new.

Like many avant-garde impulses, his work has its roots in a return to tradition. A similar impulse inspired the young Pre-Raphaelites in the mid-19th century, and showed itself again in the return to Neo-Classicism which manifested itself in the work of Picasso and others during and immediately after World War I. He takes pleasure in the sophisticated manipulation of paint, and his work has a seductive sparkle that has been absent from painting for too long. It also, and quite openly, possesses literary content, since all of the works shown here are based on T.S. Eliot's great Modernist masterpiece The Waste Land. In fact, the paintings go several steps further than this, by taking into account Eliot's own use of half-concealed literary references.

What is very contemporary about these paintings is their use of the idea of the *non-finito*. Beal speaks of his "favorite treatment of paint, sitting decided figures next to elements of painting which are unfinished or ambivalent." Essentially the spectator is asked to look at them, not as things already frozen in time, but as statements that are still in the process of evolving, capable of morphing into another form, or series of forms, the instant one looks away from them.

Effects of this kind were of course known in the past. One finds them in the work of leading Baroque artists, among them Velazquez and Hals, and also in the work of Goya. In slightly humbler (though often flashier) form they can be found in the paintings of turn-of-the nineteenth century artists such as Boldini and Sorolla. In none of these, however, is the manipulation of what is apparently finished and what is not used in away that is so neatly in harmony with our own 21st century perceptions of a world that is constantly in a condition of flux.

These are paintings designed to give pleasure – a pleasure that is only on the surface uncomplicated, but which becomes increasingly subversive the more closely we look.

CITYAM 2015
Figures stand isolated, lost in unfinished landscapes of saturated planes and floating shapes. Bartholomew Beal's paintings are as open-ended as they are dramatic, as lurid as they are dark, as rich with meaning as they are ill-defined. At only 24, Beal is already a master of ambiguity. It should come as no surprise, then, that he chose TS Eliot's The Waste Land as inspiration for his solo exhibition at the Fine Art Society. The paintings that make up A Heap of Broken Images refer to specific moments in the poem, but he doesn't limit himself to literal renderings of Eliot's words. The text is just a starting point, and Beal is open to the distortions and tangents yielded by the inherently unpredictable process of painting. The result is not just an illustration of a text, but a startling fusing of imaginations.

As the youngest ever painter to have a solo show at the Fine Art Society, Beal looks set to be a leading figure among the next generation of British painters.

Platform 505 2015
For July painting of the first order takes precedence with outstanding exhibitions in three leading Mayfair galleries. Paul Jenkins died in 2012 aged 89, after a long career exploring the boundaries of experience via a magisterial and intensely coloured fusion of expressionist and lyrical forms. Adrian Ghenie, born and based in Romania, and now in his late thirties, is a gestural artist, whose work merges painterly figuration with fierce, abstract impasto. His content is informed by a wide knowledge of history and powered by his response to the existential agony of his own country's recent past. Bartholomew Beal, not yet 25 years old, takes a seminal text of modernism, T.S.Eliot's "The Waste Land", as his point of departure, decoding it in a stunning series of interrupted narratives whose figurative ambiguity captures the fragmented nature of Eliot's poetry.

Bartholomew Beal's starting point, "The Waste Land", is a much debated and annotated poem which Eliot wrote in 1922 following the Great War. Beal's own copy complete with margin notes is on view at FAS Contemporary, and makes fascinating reading in the context of his pictorial take on such a bleak text. The cards in the Tarot pack used in clairvoyance are central to Eliot's poem and are metaphors for Beal's themes of displacement and solitude. He has referred to "ghosts" in the elaboration of his work. These seem to take the form of half realised figures, symmetrically placed in meticulous settings, with translucent geometric overlays, and ambiguous circular motifs.

The large canvas which leads the show, "A Heap of Broken Images", depicts a dejected group of aboriginals in front of a dismal corrugated shack (see image to right). In the foreground a litter of discarded objects, books with ruffled, tattered pages, a pack of cards, an empty glass and so on suggest the tools of prophecy. In Beal's imagined waste land, harmonious colours are a poignant counterpoint to human tragedy. There is also a sense of carnival or the circus as he asks whether life is essentially comic or tragic.
His "Drowned Sailor" is a lonely figure, a spectre standing in the dilapidated carcass of an unseaworthy boat (see image to left). His absurd plight is palpable and yet overhead floats a colourful mass of dancing shapes like lanterns or balloons. Beal's immaculate brushwork, scrupulous colour sense and total command of composition are consistent in all these wonderful paintings, but especially so in the large scale canvases. He is by far the youngest of three outstanding artists whose integrity and skill prove the power of painting. I urge you not to miss their exhibitions which are all easy walking distance apart. Visual pleasure and intellectual stimulus guaranteed!

The Independent 2014
Emerging artist Bartholomew Beal is staging an exhibition of bold paintings based on TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

Beal's A Heap of Broken Images is a translation of the famous poem onto canvas and will be on display at The Fine Art Society until late August.

A palette of vivid, saturated colour is used to heighten the drama and nuance of Beal's artworks and ensure that "no passage is singular, static or empty" in a nod to Eliot's style. Subtle 'ghost' paintings can often be traced in the canvasses that are important fragments of the story, allowing Beal to mirror the multiple viewpoints, characters and languages found in Eliot's landmark poem.

Beal says he aims to achieve a "healthy tussle" between referencing specifics from *The Waste Land* and surrendering himself to the unpredictable creative process.

The lone, generalised man in the middle of each painting leaves the artworks open to the viewer's imagination with his changing surroundings offering hints and suggestions

"My paintings are an attempt to translate mood and atmosphere through process and progress," says Beal. "My paintings are sometimes an early stop and sometimes a long drawn-out effort to realise the original intention - a quiet figure within an under-described space."

Beal graduated from Wimbledon College of Arts in 2012 and his paintings can be found in the Saudi Royal Family's private collection.

His use of paint has been praised for its "seductive sparkle" by art historian Edward Lucie-Smith, with A Heap of Broken Images marking Beal out as the youngest artist ever to stage a solo show at the 138-year-old London gallery.

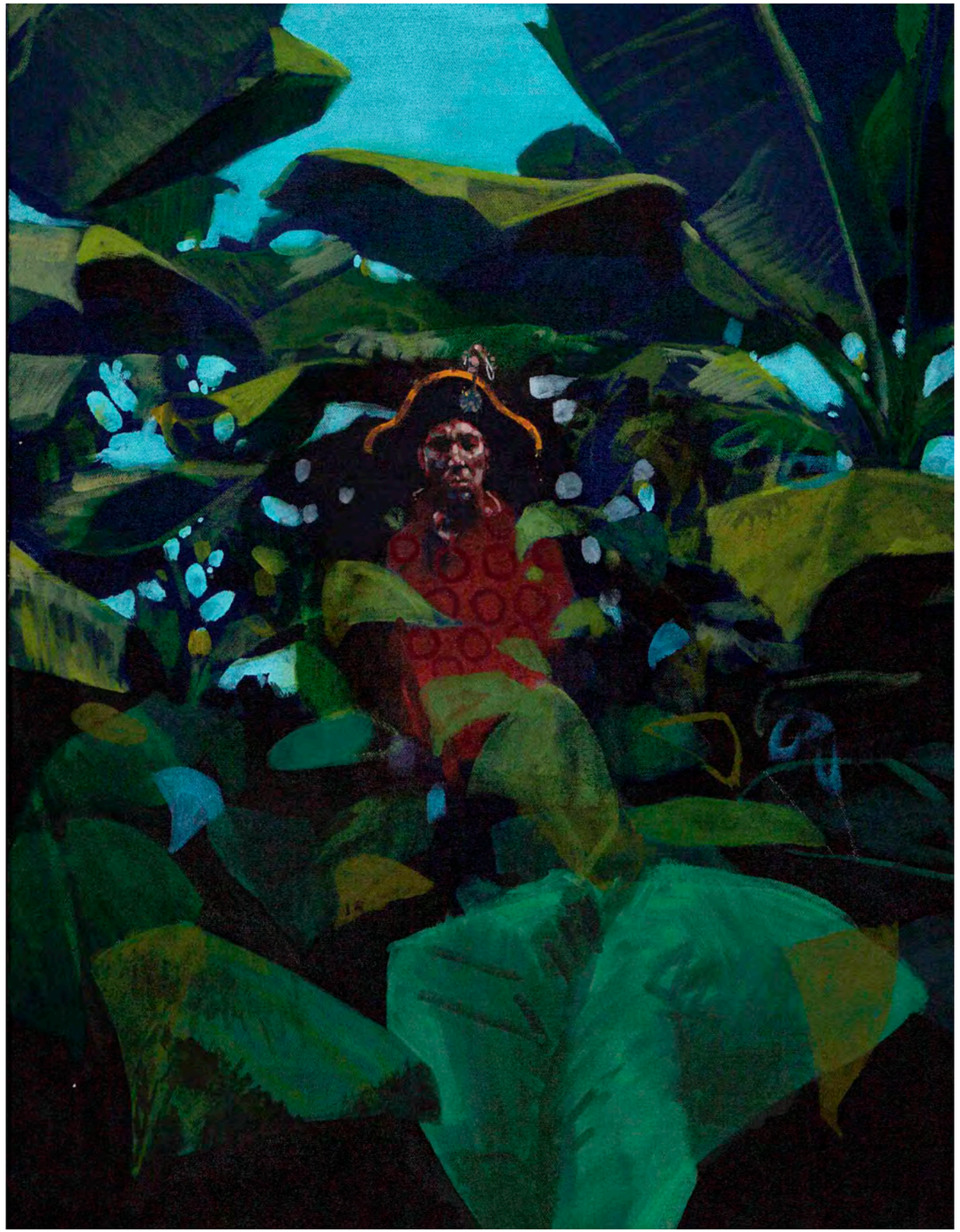
Ebb and Flow, 400cm x 160cm (200cm x 160cm (x2)), oil on canvas, 2016.

Ripeness is All, 200cm x 140cm, oil on canvas, 2016.

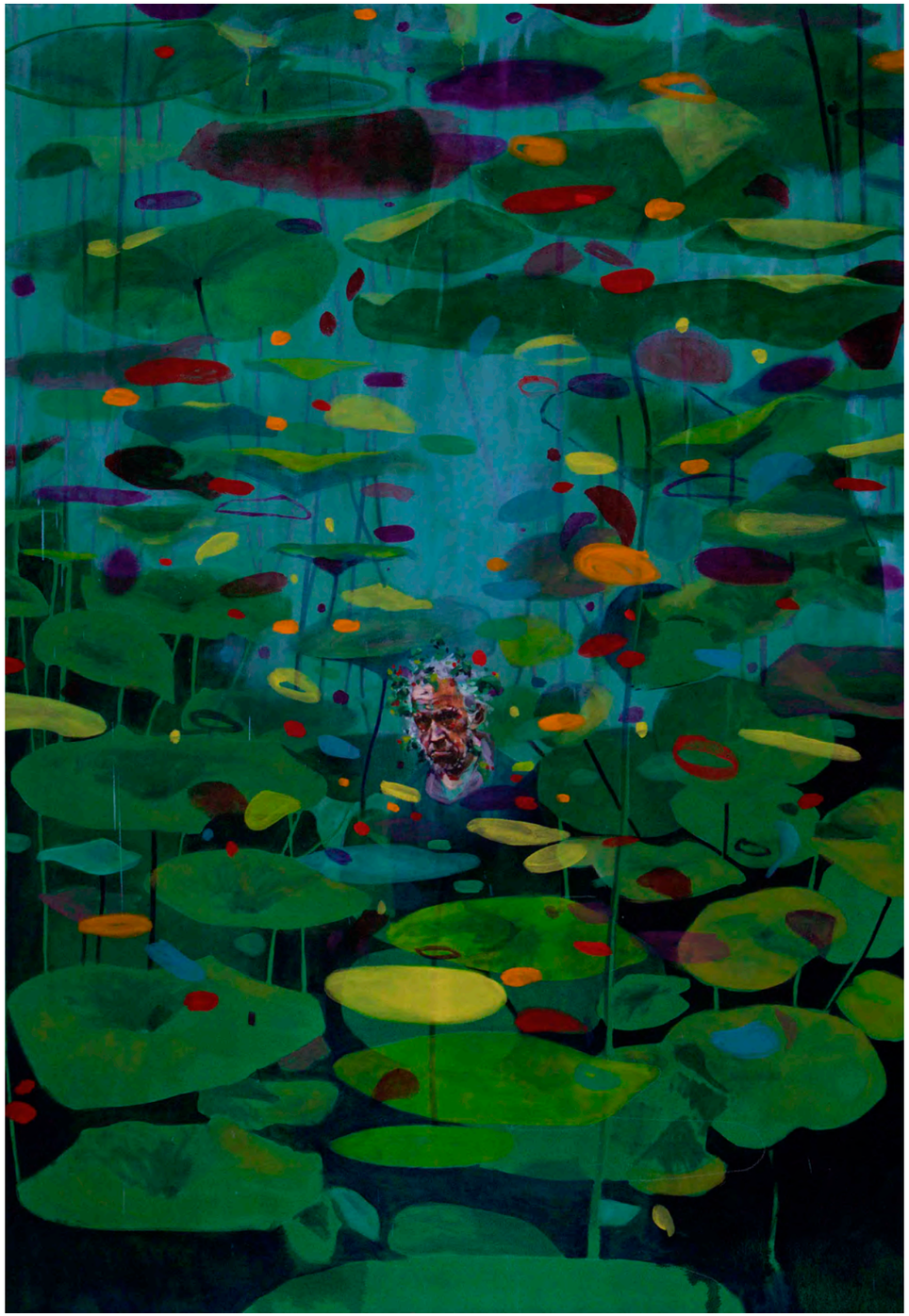
In Jest, There Is Truth, 225cm x 180cm, oil on canvas, 2016.

Elf all my hair in knots, 45cm x 35cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Little world of man, 115cm x 75cm, oil on canvas, 2015.



My master calls me, 65cm x 50cm, oil on canvas, 2015.



The standing pool, 180cm x 125cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Shut up your doors, oil on canvas, 225cm x 180cm, 2015.

I want no eyes, 225cm x 180cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Every Day, 225cm x 175 cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

BARTHOLOMEW BEAL

Born 24/08/1989

EDUCATION

2009 - 12: BA Fine Art Painting, Wimbledon (1st Class Hons)
College of Art, Gloucestershire

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016: The Great stage of Fools - I.P. Arts collab. with FAS, Bond Street London
2015: Bartholomew Beal Temple, I.P. Arts, London
2014: A Heap of Broken Images, I.P. Arts in collaboration with FAS, London
2013: Saint Monday and Thereby Hangs a Tale, I.P. Arts in collaboration with Derby Museusm & Jonathan Vickers
Biscuit, I saved you half - I.P. Arts @ Mall Gallery, London (with Eleanor Watson)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2014: What Marcel Duchamp Taught Me, I.P Arts in collaboration with FAS, London
Art14, I.P Arts in collaboration with FAS, London
2013: Memory and Desire Part 1, IP Arts @Theobald Jennings Gallery, London
2012: FLOCK 2012 Wimbledon College of Art Degree Show, London
100outof10, Vyner Street Gallery, London
The Perfect Nude, Wimbledon Space | Exeter Phoenix | Charlie Smith Gallery, London, Amsterdam
2011: London Last Orders, Brick Lane Gallery, London
Baker's Dozen, Acquire, London

ART FAIRS

2015: Art Miami 2015, I.P. Arts with C.Corbett Gal, Miami
Farfetch, I.P. Arts, London
Young Master Dialogues, I.P. Arts with C.Corbett Gal, London and New York
Young Masters Prize, I.P. Arts with C.Corbett Gal, London
Royal Arts & Fashion, I.P. Arts @ Middle Temple Hall, London , I.P. Arts with C.Corbett Gal, London
Art15, IP Arts in collaboration with FAS, London
Scope Art Fair 2015 , IP Arts with OS Gallery, Miami

AWARDS

Landmark Plc Fine Art Award
2011 / Finalist of the Hans Brinker Student
Painting Prize, Amsterdam

PAUL BENNEY

Dark Mirror Series - (PAUL), 66cm x 47 cm, oil on board. Private Collection, 2014.

Dark Mirror Series - (NCQ), 66cm x 47 cm, oil on board. Private Collection, 2014.

Dark Mirror Series - (Lucca), 66cm x 47 cm, oil on board. Private Collection, 2014.

Dark Mirror Series - (RD), 66cm x 47 cm, oil on board. Private Collection, 2014.

Third Station, 183cm x 91cm, oil on canvas, 2016.

St Bartholomew, 122cm x 61 cm, oil and resin on wood, 2014.

St. Andrew, 122cm x 61 cm, oil and resin on wood, 2012.

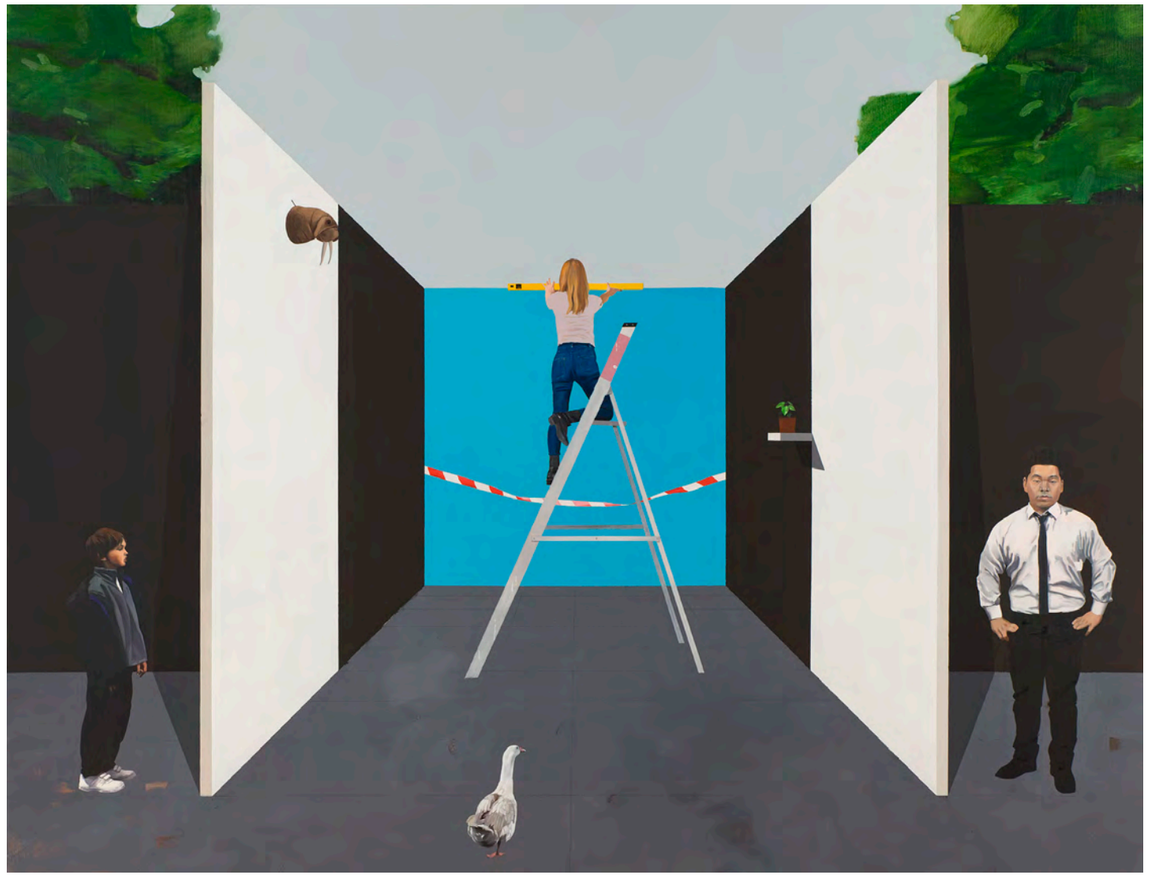
Dying Slave, 320cm x 208 cm, oil on canvas, 2016.

JIMIN CHAE

Over the past few years Chae has developed a unique artistic language that he communicates through his paintings. Using formal, realistic painting techniques combined with hints of expressionistic brushstrokes, He recreates static moments that he discovers in his own world. Having always been drawn to peaceful settings, he carefully observes these moments of calm to select scenes that have narratives of their own. He then collages these chosen scenes on a canvas, adding a new dimension to compositions.

At the very center of Chae's work lies a narrative derived from daily life, the motif to his work. At first glance, viewers see the saturated color planes with a person or persons gazing upon different items or into another space, creating a sense of curiosity. This first impression gives way to an odd sense of surreal emotions and discomfort. The carefully positioned geometrical lines and the people appear well balanced at first, but gradually we realize that the images within one framework are out of place, a trick that the artist perhaps had in mind when painting each work. Behind the calmness and beauty of his subtle environments, the viewer connects with the surrealistic situation creating a hint of anxiety from being out of one's comfort zone.

Chae's recent series *Unspecified Space* is a good example to explain about his attitude towards painting. In these works, many objects from his daily life independently exist on a canvas. These randomly, but carefully chosen objects take a roll in creating tension between two-dimensional (actual) flatness and three-dimensional (virtual) space of a picture plane. Although viewers could imagine some stories or a narrative sense in the painting, those are just a side effect from his painting process. The scene, which he created, has not been intended to tell or deliver some meaning, but rather shows what he sees and how he paints. Consequently, this painting is more about the experiment on colours, formative shapes and a composition representing Chae's visual identity.



Artificial Situation, 112.1cm x145.5cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Artificial Situation, 112.1cm x 145.5cm, oil on canvas, 2016.

Henry with selective objects, 60.5cm x 60.5cm, oil on canvas, 2014.

Studio_Unspecified Space, 136cm x 136cm(each), oil on canvas, 2014.

Unspecified Space, 152.4cm x 182.9cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Unspecified Space, 97cm x 130.3cm, oil on canvas, 2016.

Untitled#1, 76.2cm x 101.6cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Untitled#2, 76.2cm x 101.6cm, oil on canvas, 2015.

Untitled, 73cm x 90.7cm, oil on canvas, 2014.

JIMIN CHAE

Born 1983, Seoul, Korea

EDUCATION

2009: Seoul National University, College of Fine Arts, BFA

2014: Chelsea College of Art & Design, Fine Arts, MA

SOLO EXHIBITION

2015: Unspecified Space, Gallery EM, Seoul

GROUP EXHIBITION

2016: In The End, We Are All Alone, Griffin Gallery, London

2015: Il Mare, Art Mora Gallery, New York
Open Unconscious, BBCN Bank, New York

2014: Assembly: CCW Alumni Show 2014, Triangle Space & Cookhouse Gallery, London
Chelsea Salon, CONS Project, London
Chelsea MA Show in Camden, Squat Space, London

2012: Very, Vary, Keumsan Gallery, Seoul

2011: Space Reflected : Jimin Chae & Eunhyea Choi, Gallery EM, Seoul
Revolution, X-Power Gallery, Taipei
Hatch Out, KIC Art Center, Shanghai

2010: Symbolon, Hwa's Gallery, Shanghai
Cho-Ah Salon : Open Studio>, Cho-Ah Salon, Seoul
Preview, Team Preview, Seoul
Meet the people : Cho-Ah Salon, Keumsan Gallery, Paju

2009: NEO-PAX, Yi-Hyung Art Center, Seoul
First Step, Gallery Young, Seoul

ART FAIR

2014: Art 14 London, Olympia Grand, London

RESIDENCY

2015: AHL Foundation Residency Program, New Rochelle, New York

COLLECTIONS

Hyundai Capital, Hongkong

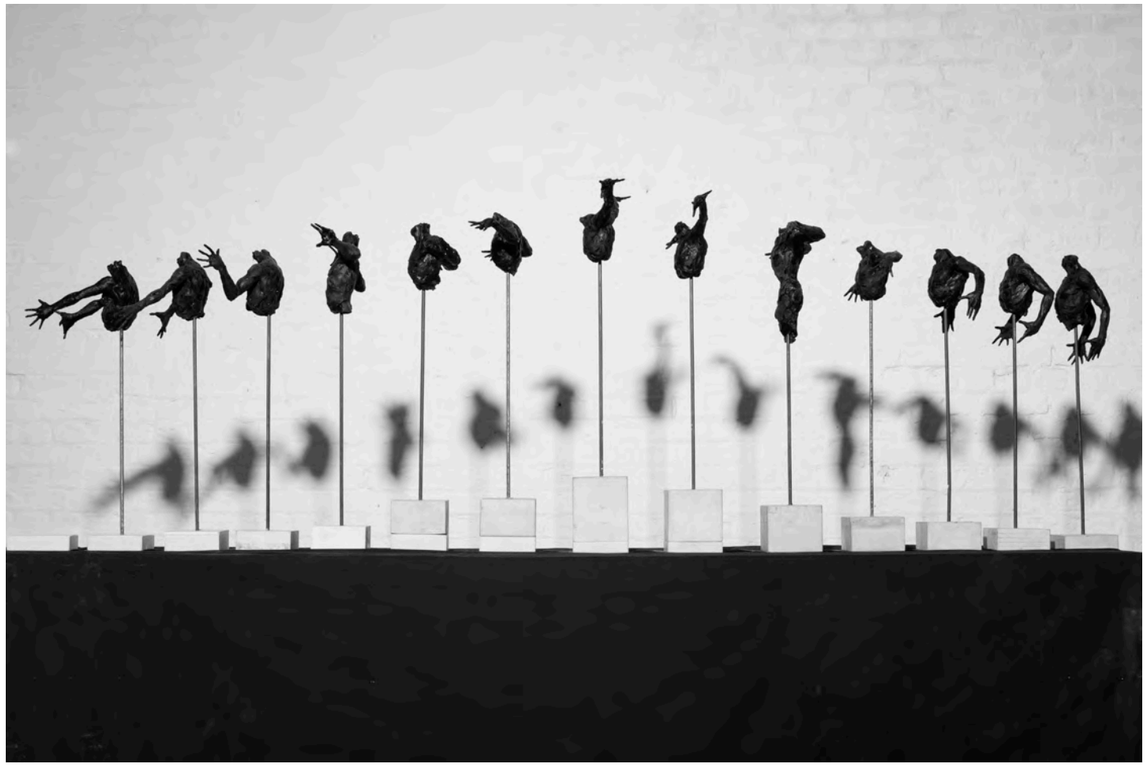
GUY HADDON-GRANT

"Paradoxically, while you are falling, you will probably feel as if you are floating- or not even moving at all. Falling is relational- if there is nothing to fall toward, you may not even be aware that you are falling."
Hito Steyerl

The Pleasure and Terror of Levitation takes its most direct inspiration from the photographic work of the same name by Aaron Siskind, showing teenagers diving at Lake Michigan in Chicago in the 1950s. Siskind's photographs focus more on the spontaneity and freedom of flight than the physicality of it, his suspended subjects relieved of the pressures and formalities of the world below. Haddon Grant's sculpted figures similarly exist in a state of freefall, exploring the conflict between the joy of weightlessness and the anxious wait for the inevitable plummet. This sensation of groundlessness has been thought to characterize the modern age as new technologies and ways of thinking have shattered traditional perspectives.

These sculptures act as an anatomical examination of the body in motion, drawing on the pioneering photographic studies of movement by Eadweard Muybridge and Thomas Eakins in the late Nineteenth Century. Like these photographers' sequences of freeze frames, the sculptures individually allow the viewer to examine each bodily position and then together animate the process of propulsion and flight.

Pleasure And Terror Of Levitation-bronze, 300cm x 90cm x50cm.



Pleasure And Terror Of Levitation-bronze, 300cm x 90cm x50cm.

Pleasure And Terror Of Levitation-bronze, 300cm x 90cm x50cm.

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Pleasure And Terror Of Levitation-bronze, 300cm x 90cm x50cm.

Pleasure And Terror Of Levitation-bronze, 300cm x 90cm x50cm.

GUY HADDON-GRANT

Born 1986, London

EDUCATION

2009-2010: Camberwell College of Art, London, BA Drawing (3rd Year)
2007-2009: Florence Italy: Cecil Studios
2005-2007: Camberwell College of Arts, London, BA Drawing
2004-2005: Wimbledon School of Art: Foundation Diploma Fine Art

SOLO EXHIBITION

2015: Dust and Shadows, Karavil Contemporary, London
2014: Apophenia, Gulbenkian Gallery, R.C.A

GROUP EXHIBITION

2015: Small is Beautiful, Flowers Gallery, Cork street
Art for Youth 2015, Mall Galleries
Silent Movies, Q park Cavendish Square
Office Sessions, 40 Beak Street Soho
The British Figure, Flowers Gallery, Kingsland Road
London Art Fair, Panter and Hall
2014: Oil and Water gallery.
Office Sessions, East India Docks
2013: FACE2013, Society of Portrait Sculptors Open Exhibition
Art For Youth 2013, Royal College of Art
2012: FACE2012, Society of Portrait Sculptors Open Exhibition
Art For Youth 2012, Royal College of Art
2011: FACE2011, Society of Portrait Sculptors Open Exhibition
Art For Youth 2011, Royal College of Art
2010: A Site, Teravina Fine Art, Cortona
A Site, Teravina Fine Art, Athens
Auction East, 500 Dollar Gallery, Vyner Street London
Affordable Arts Fair, Recent Graduates Showcase, Battersea, London
Bloomberg New Contemporaries,
A foundation, Liverpool (September-November),
ICA, London (November-January)
Art for Youth London 2010, Royal College of Art
Oriel Summer Exhibition, Oriel Plas Glyn-y-Weddw
Degree Show, Camberwell, Camberwell College, London
FACE 2010, Society of Portrait Sculptors Annual
Open Exhibition, The Gallery, London

GUILLEMETTE MONCHY

In her work, Guillemette Monchy confronts a multitude of areas, objects, figures, shapes and techniques, thus creating an enigmatic picture, echoing the disparate place we live in. She draws fragments of our world, often intertwined between Reality and Fiction, remains of places and unknown times, her work deals with the flesh of our collective past and present and their ambiguities. Through her drawings, she aspires to a visual objectivity, adding contradicting elements and figures, allowing the viewer to experience a sense of strangeness, inviting him to enter in a purely fictional space.

During her art studies, she worked on the relationship between civilization and the contemporary landscape, especially focusing on industrial and commercial areas. She was interested by the paradox emerging from those disembodied places, results of human activity and yet profoundly inhabited, invoking nature itself rather than humanity, defying rules of property, areas where passing through is the only possible option.

The potential such an image creates - opening the viewer's imagination, enabling him to guess, to let his imagination wander amongst the possibilities - is one of Guillemette Monchy quest. She conceives her drawings as riddles or games, shifting between the visible and the hidden, where things seem to live off the drawing, elements hiding others, objects acting as clues, residues of actions and gestures we need to imagine. Thus the picture becomes surprising, sometimes maybe even stunning, yet dreamful.

Her creative process orchestrates itself around a wide array of sources - images she draws inspiration from, but also the consistent use of different technical mediums : watercolor, color pencil, graphite pencil, charcoal powder, pigments, patchworks are all used in her work. The visuals she uses can be her own and concrete - photographies, sketches, but as well incorporating the purely mental : dreams, memories, visions. She also refers to others' stories, art pieces, photographic archives, movies, and the so called 'objective' pictures issued from the hegemonic will of the virtual kingdom and its attempt of allenglobing the real (Google map, Google Earth). The various sources in which she draws inspiration, in a rather paradoxical way reveal the impossibility to get a 'true' image of our world, indefinably relying to, and trying to stay faithful to the complexity of our experiences.

"A child playing—a summer evening—doors will open and shut, will keep opening and shutting, through which I see sights that make me weep. For they cannot be imparted. Hence our loneliness ; hence our desolation."

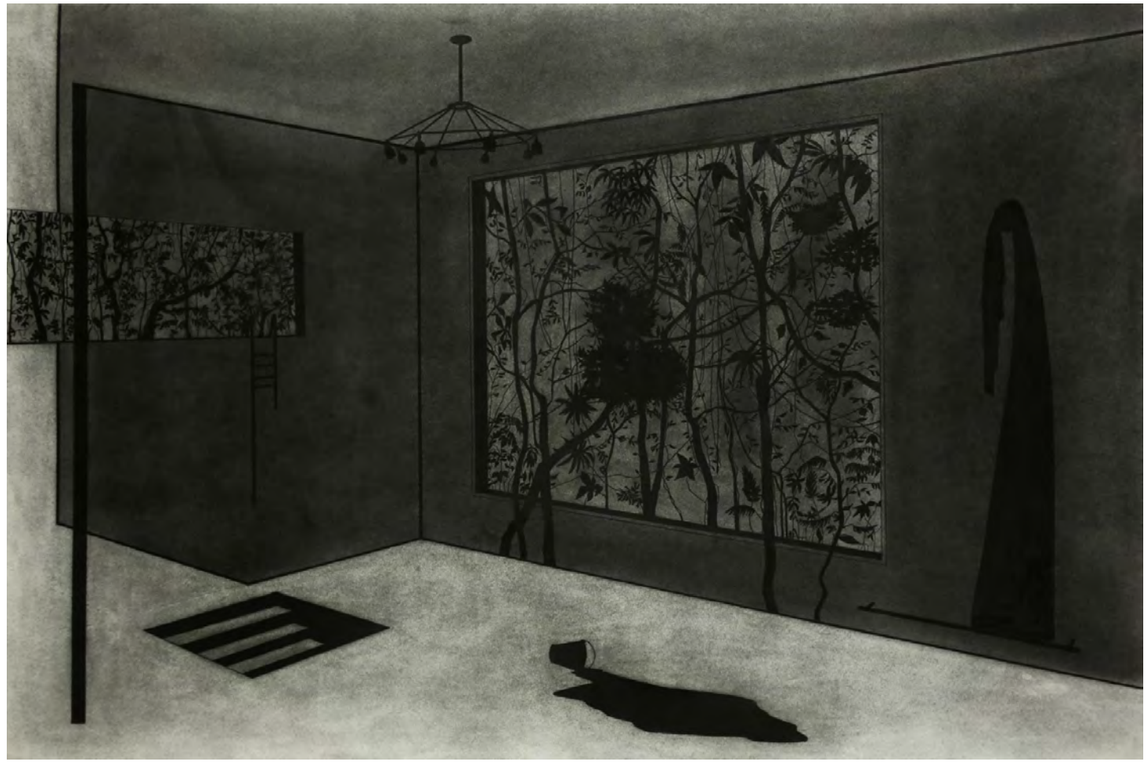
This excerpt from Virginia Woolf's The Waves is suitably reflective of our inherent solitude. We are all, all alone. This state of separateness, this feeling of being always more or less 'a stranger' is something each of us experiences, hence a link between us all; we share our solitudes. This fundamental paradox is, like all paradoxes, most stimulating for an artist. There is a link between solitude and space in my work. The places where we have experienced solitude leave a deeper impression on us, probably because once alone we get more receptive to our surroundings - and then thought inhabits space in the same way as space influences thought.

If solitude has to do with 'the end', our consciousness of being mortals, I think it also has to do with beginnings, with what was, what belongs to us personally - and yet escapes us. For me the most intense moments of creation are solitary ones; beautiful adventures in solitude, conducive to a dialogue filled with as much excitement as conflict between oneself and an object one is giving birth to. Thus, to create a work is to produce strangeness out of oneself, enigmatic matter out of familiar objects; it is to go ceaselessly from the surface of the mirror to what lies beyond, *Through the Looking-Glass*.

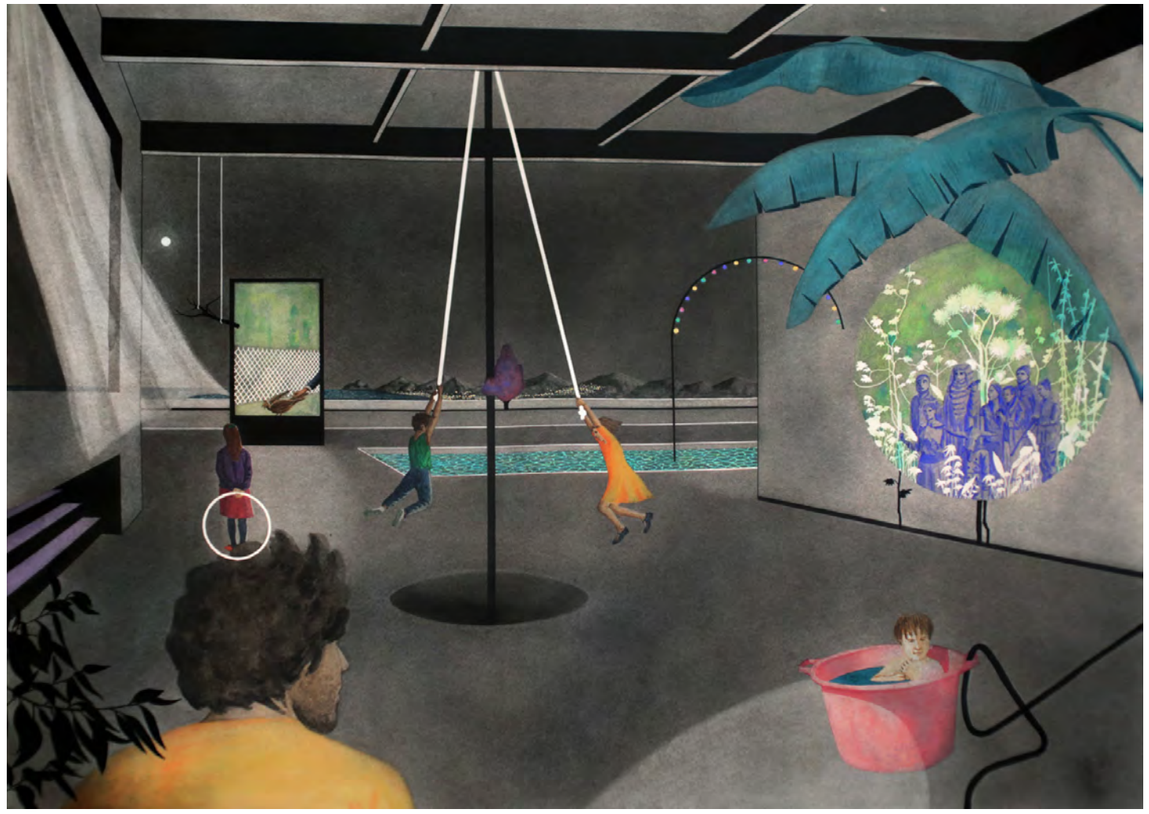
Sine Loco (small works)
Somewhere between Capriccio and the Vedute these imaginary landscapes are composed of archaeological elements, plants, machine objects that connect and interact in a way that is as enigmatic as aberrant. In spite of the absence of any human presence some clues suggest a kind of activity, the function of which, nevertheless, seems vain and mysterious.

Stripped of occupancy, whether in abeyance or deserted, these places look like remnants of some undefined time, muddled echoes of the heterogeneous world in which we live. Sine Loco (devoid of location) is a Latin phrase used as a bibliographical abbreviation. !!

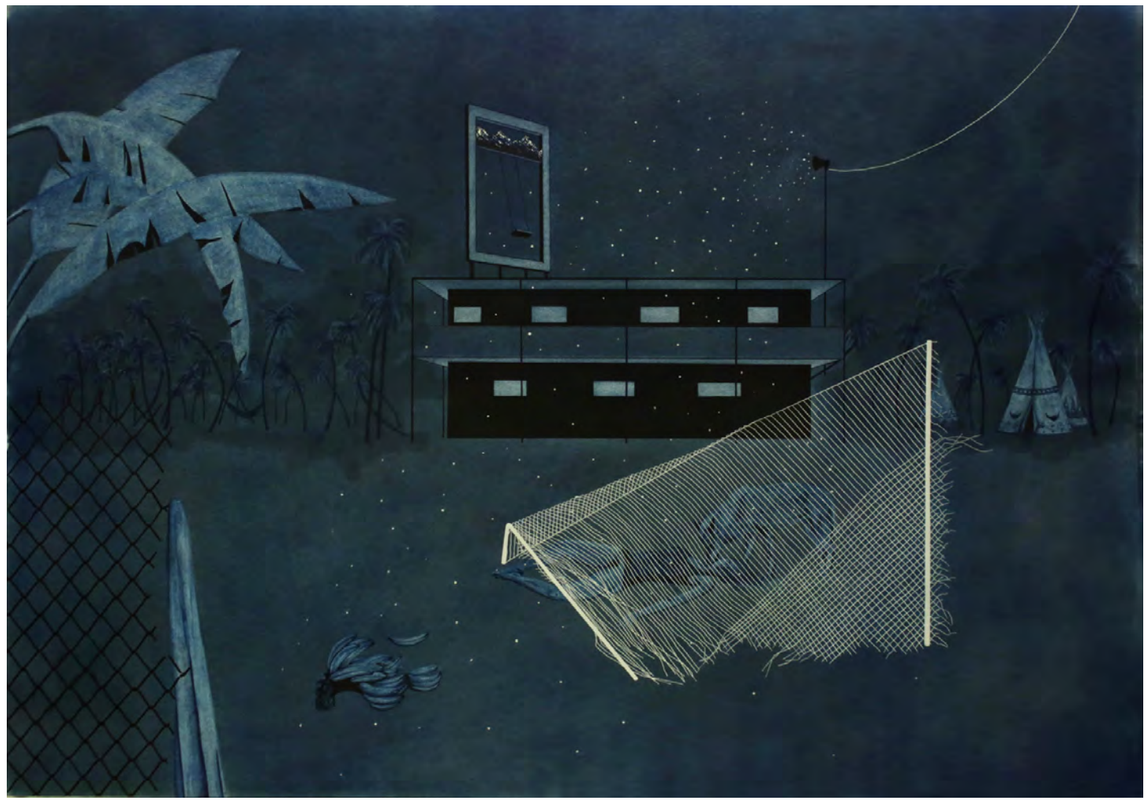
Nocturnes (large works)
These drawings present night scenes where mobile elements (objects, individuals) are matched with strange places and undefined architectural shapes. The charcoal and pigment powders both veil and unveil those scenes; the archaeological elements, plants, objects, individuals and animals can be full shadows, uniform foreground masses or appear in the depth of the suggested space.



Echapée (Escape), 78cm x 119cm, mix media on paper, 2014.

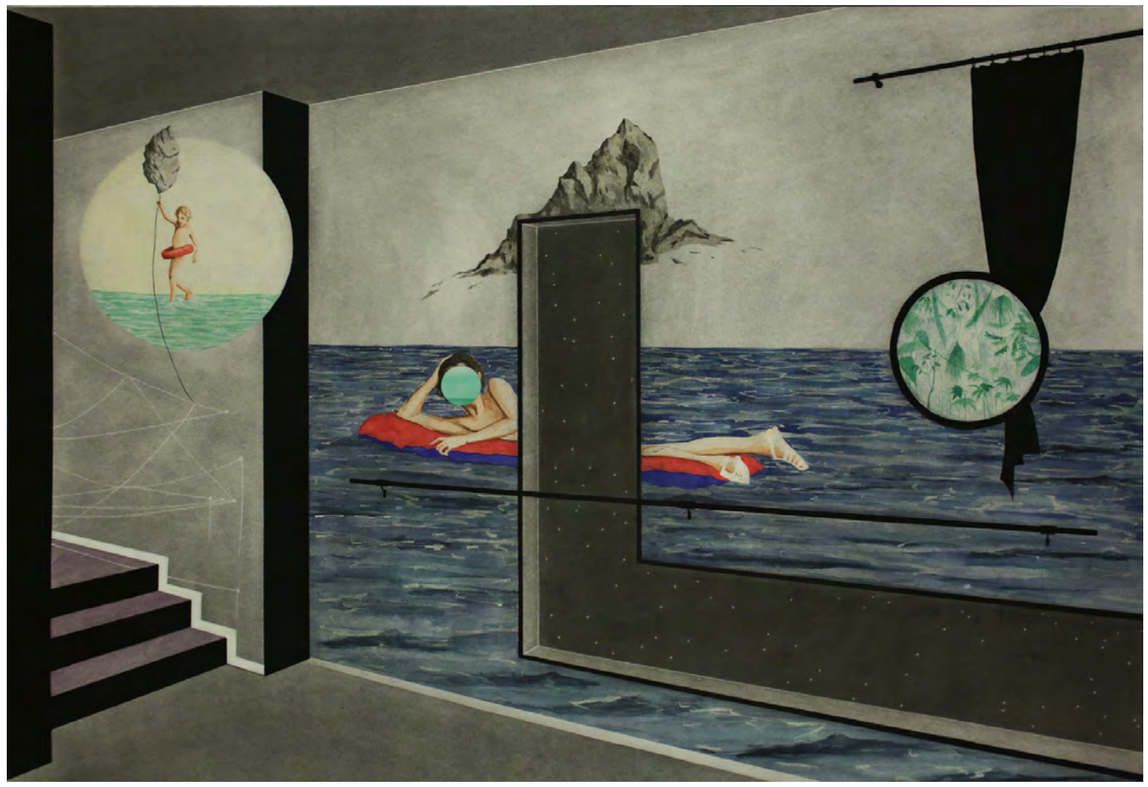


Effractions (break ins), 90cm x 115cm, mix media on paper, 2015.



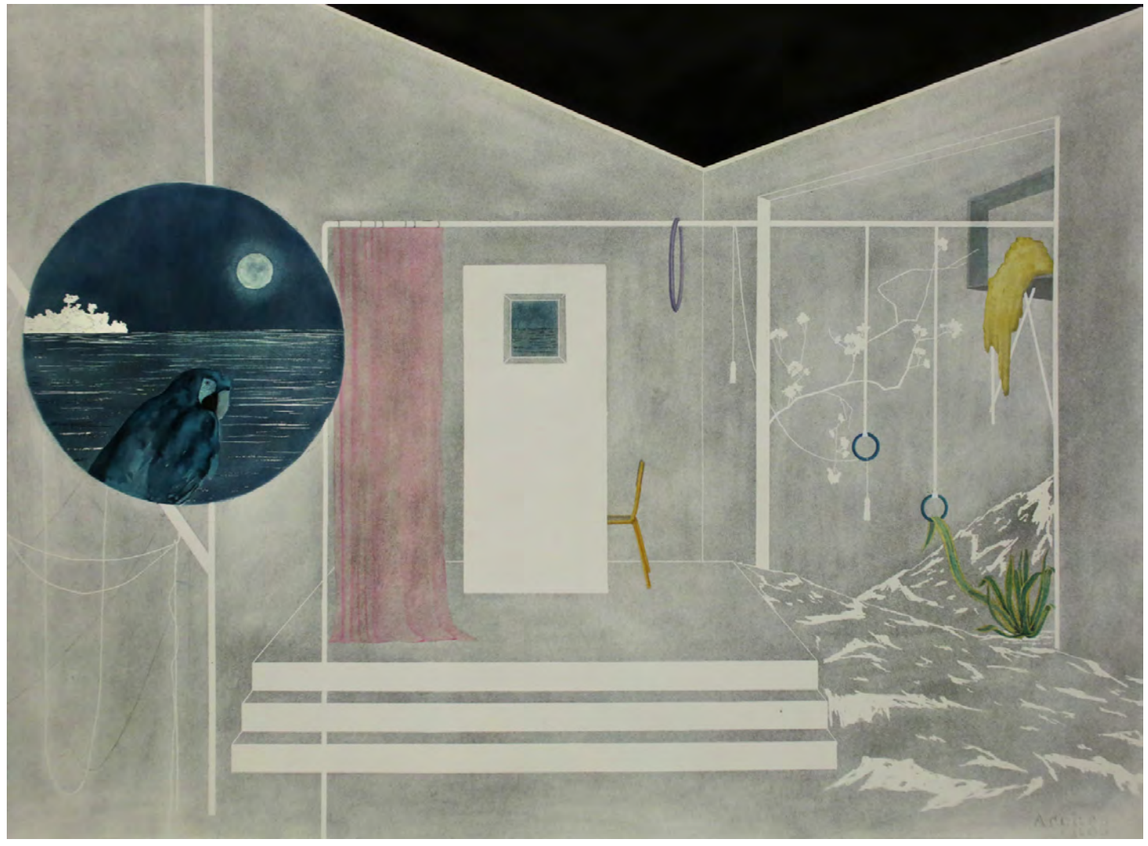
L'appel (the call), 80cm x 115cm, mix media on paper, 2015.

Le repos de Diane (Diane's rest), 156cm x 115cm, mix media on paper, 2016.

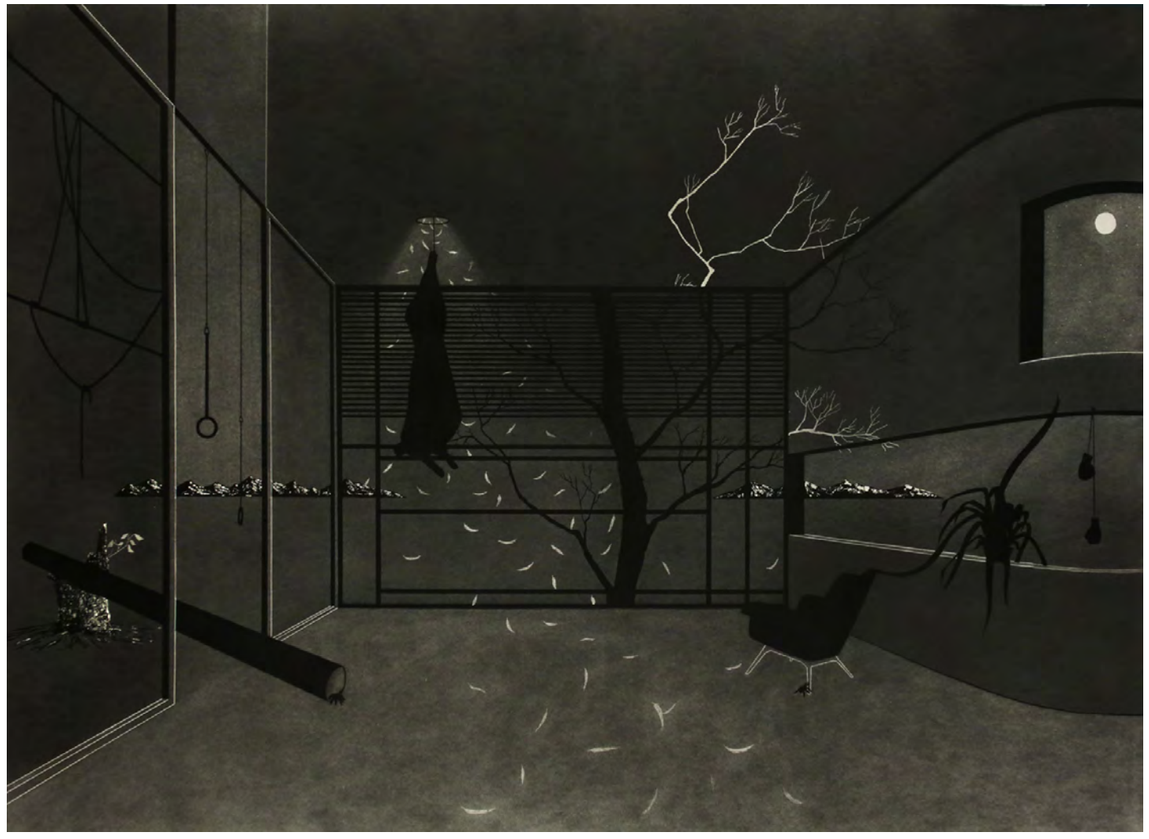


Les accords miroirs (mirror accords), 78cm x 107cm, mix media on paper, 2015.

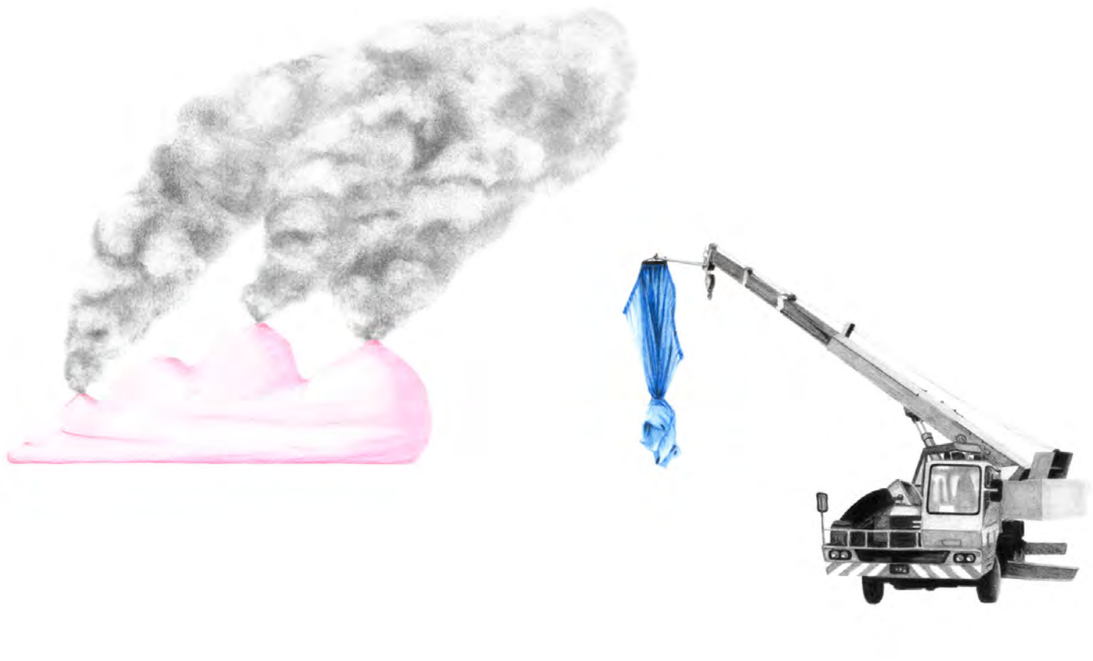
Les échos (the echoes), 80cm x 115cm, mix media on paper, 2015.



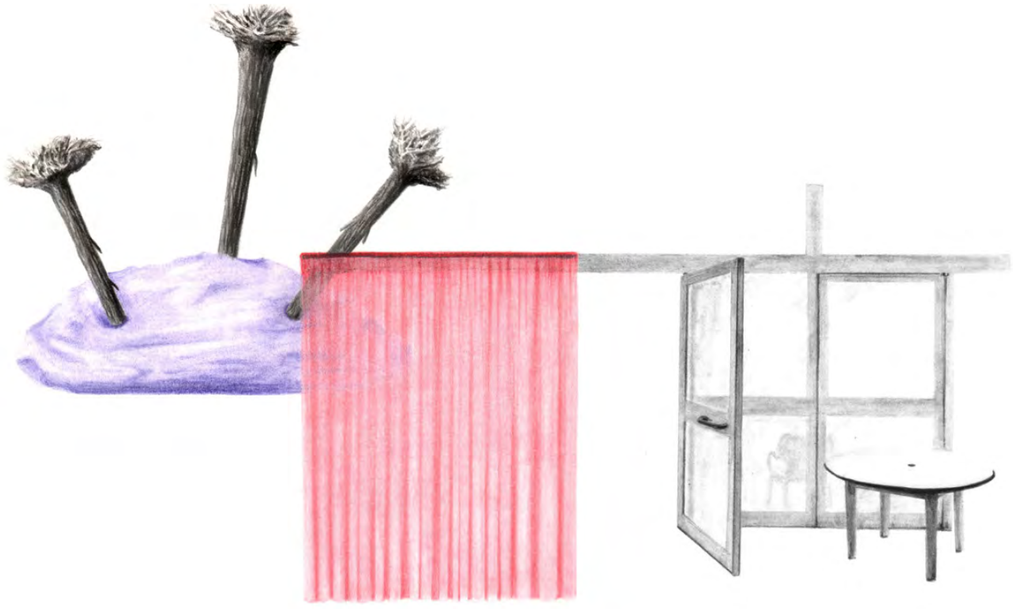
Navigation, 60cm x 83cm, mix media on paper, 2014.



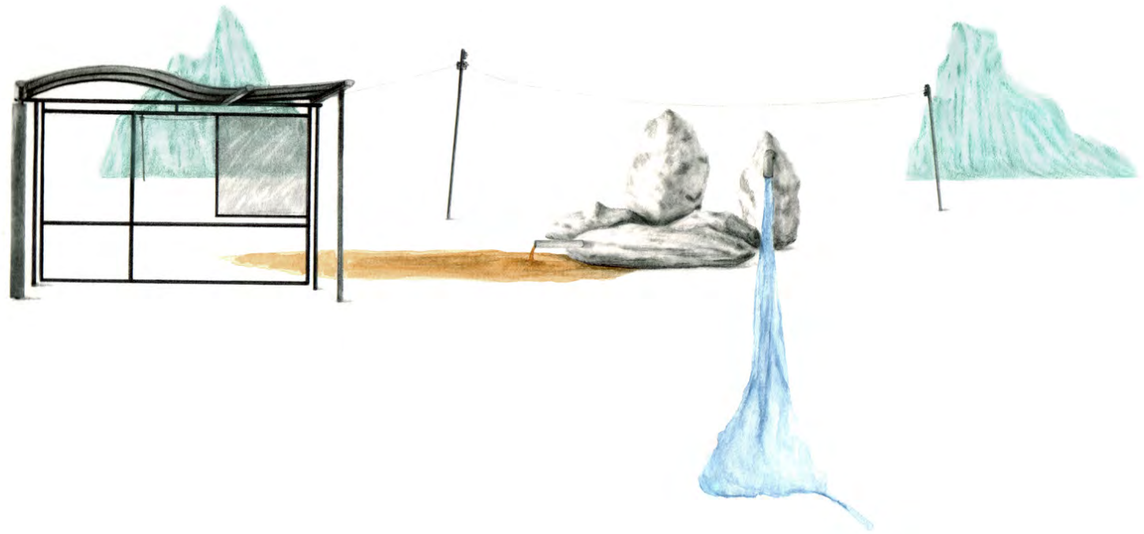
Sans colère et sans haine (without anger and hate), 76cm x 105cm, mix media on paper, 2015.



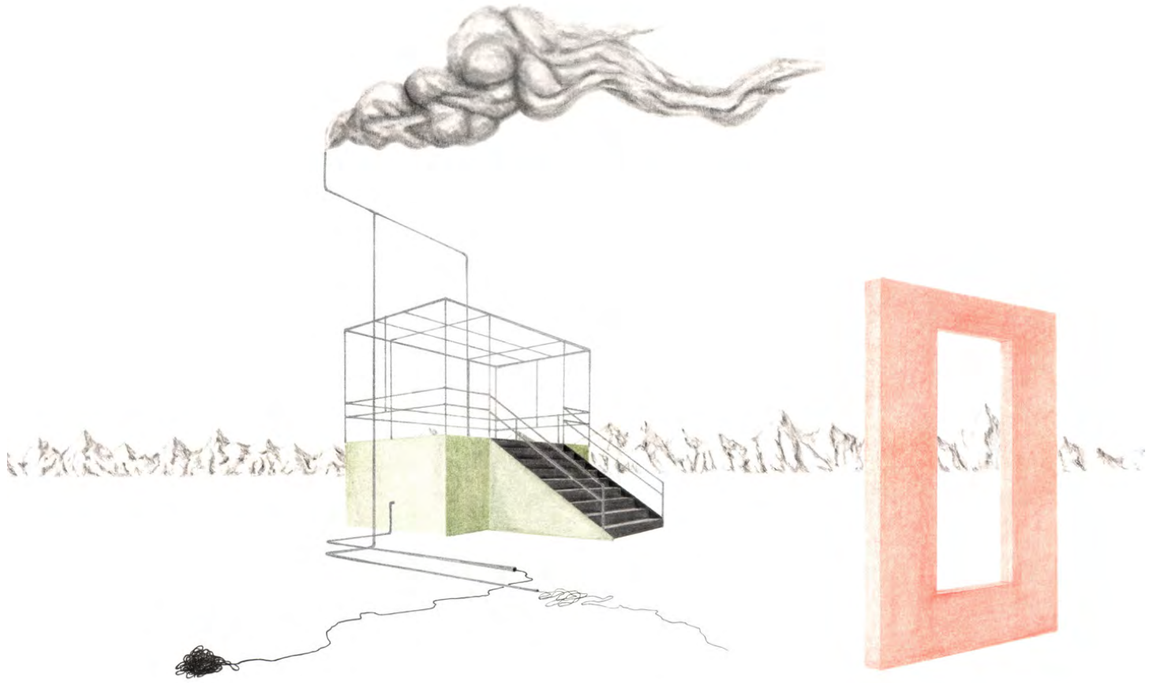
s.l.II, 24,5cm x 34cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper, 2013.



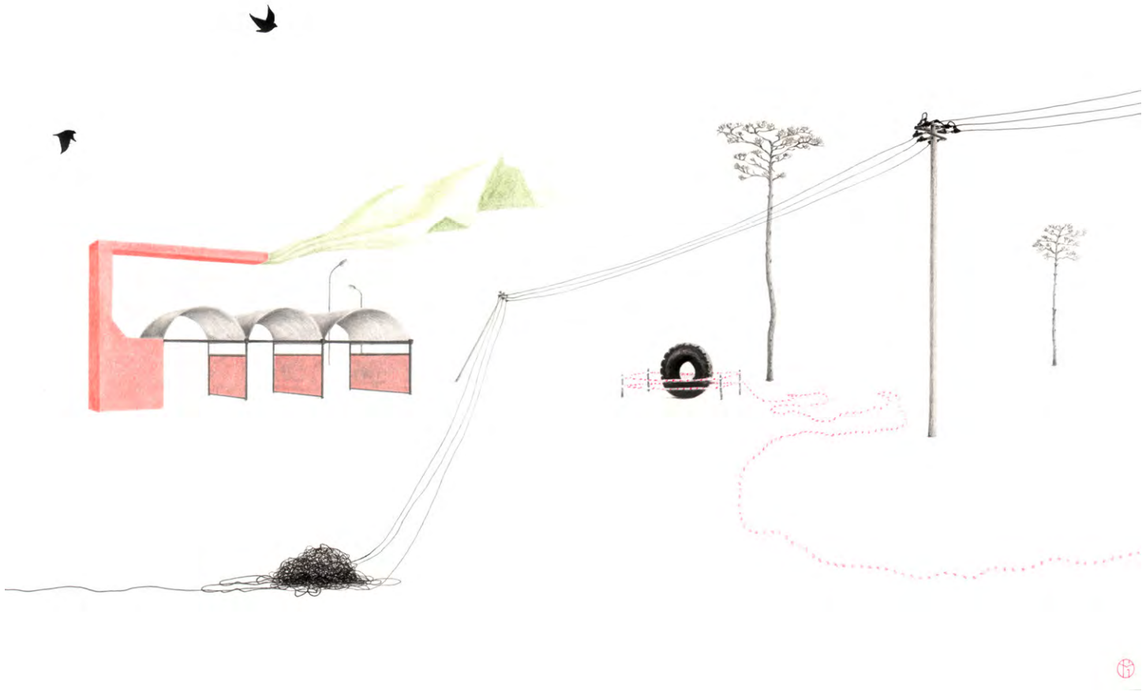
s.l.III, 24,7cm x 31,7cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper, 2013.



s.l.IV, 21,5cm x 33,5cm, mixed media on paper, 2013.



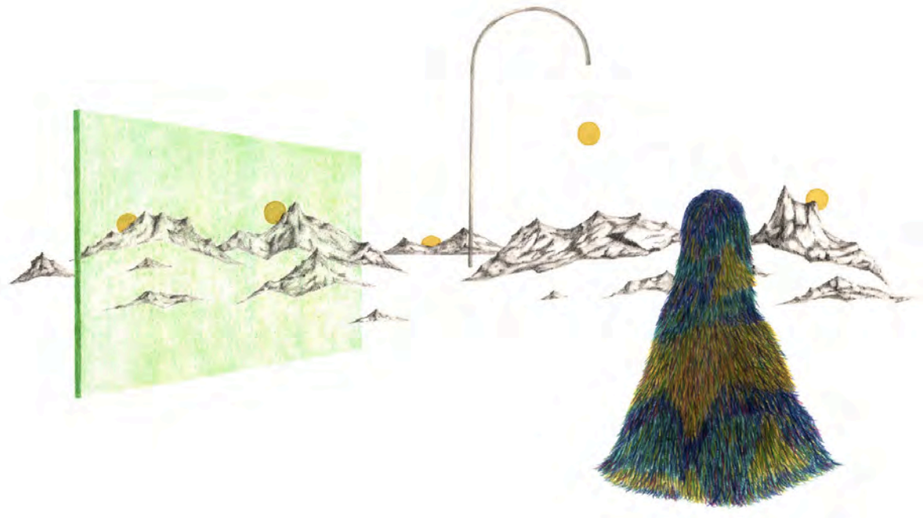
s.l.VII, 26cm x 36cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper,2014.



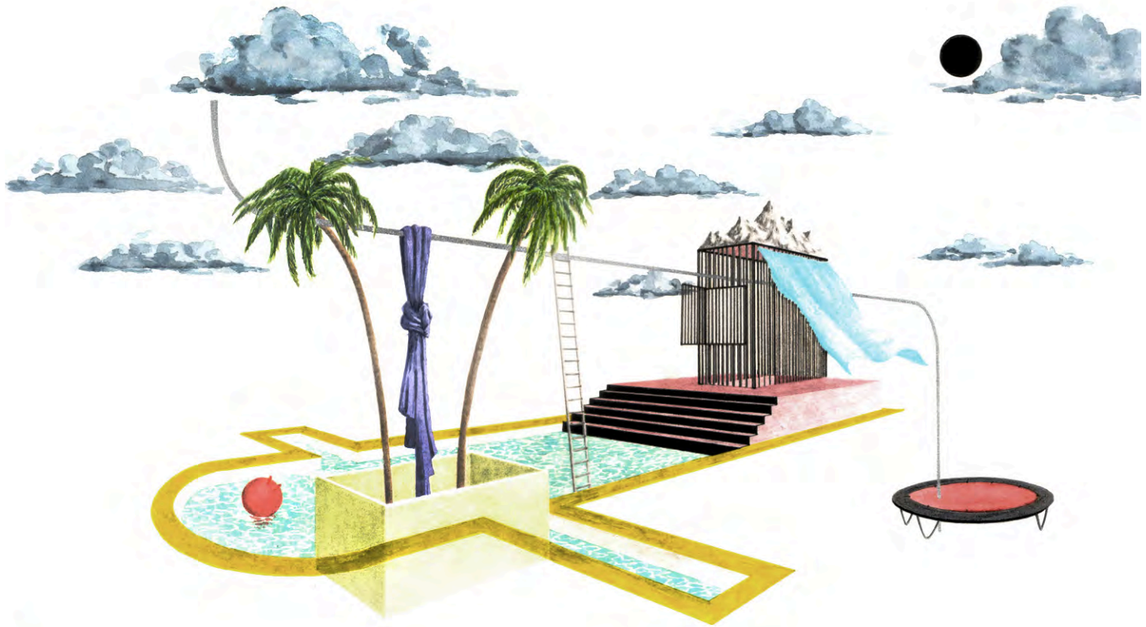
s.l.IX, 26cm x 36cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper,2014.

s.l.X, 33cm x 65cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper, 2014.

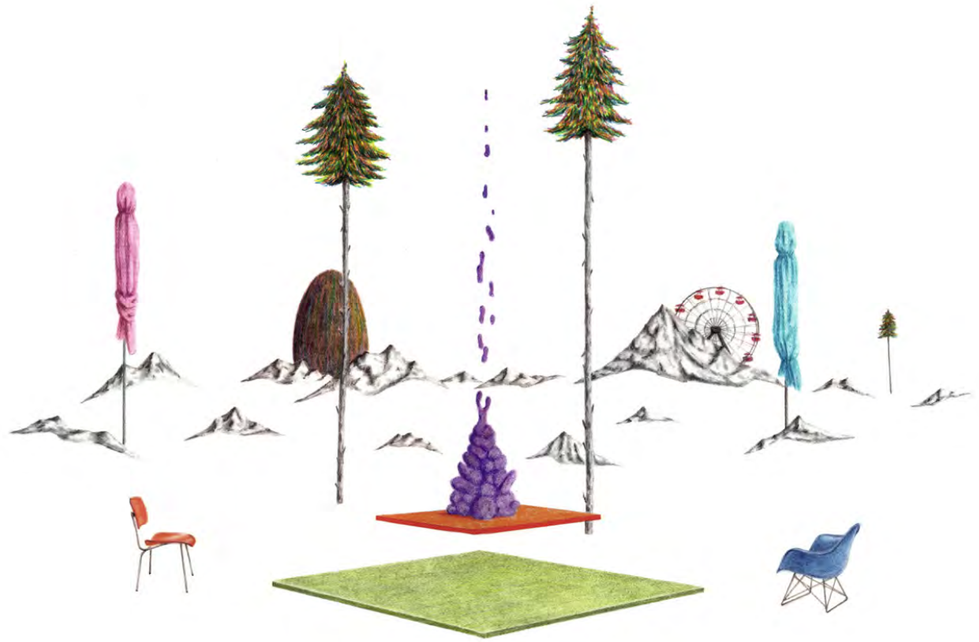
s.l.XVI, 26cm x 36cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper, 2015.



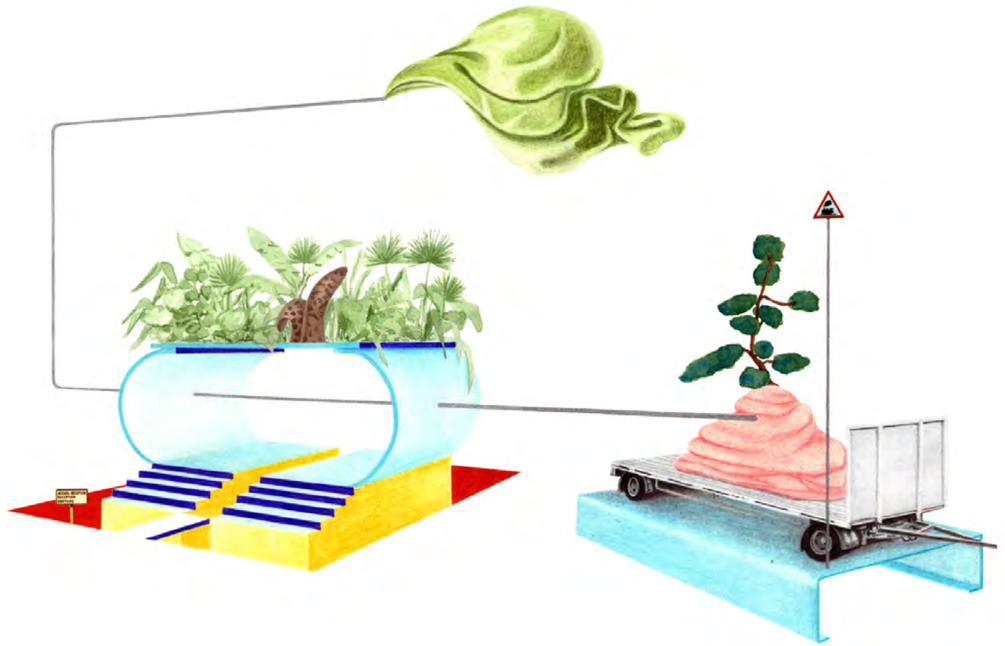
s.l.XVII, 26cm x 36cm, graphite and colored pencils on paper, 2015.



s.l.XVIII, 25,5cm x 36cm, mixed media on paper, 2015.



s.l.XIX, 26cm x 36cm, graphite and color pencil on paper, 2016.



s.l.XX, 26cm x 36cm, graphite and color pencil on paper, 2016.

GUILLEMETTE MONCHY

Born 1983, Roubaix, France.

EDUCATION

2008: Agregation in Arts (national competitive recruitment examination for teaching)

2007: Master II Arts studies, research essay entitled : Industrial areas, Inventory of a contradictory space, under the direction of Jean da Silva, Paris-Sorbonne University, France

2006: Master I Arts studies, research essay entitled : Creative drift, Walk as en artistic practice, under the direction of Erik Verhagen, Valenciennes University, France.

2005: Licence Arts studies, Valenciennes University, France

2004: Accademia di belli arti di Palermo, Italy.

GROUP EXHIBITION

2015: Dessiner l'invisible, Galerie Antonine Catzéflis & Galerie 24B, Paris, France.

Caprices, CP5, Paris, France.

2014: #grandeguerre, Fort de Condé, Chivres-Val, France.

J'assume pas, CP5, Paris, France.

2010: Exhibition with the artists collective Curry Vavart, Le Gros Belec, Paris, France.

COLLECTIONS

Mariana Krutilin & Boris Mirow 's private collection

DORTE KLOPPENBORG SKRUMSAGER

Dorte's practice evolves around our search for meaning and belonging. Our fast-paced, interconnected multicultural world elevates these very existential human feelings and challenges the concept of a *strong identity*. Modern identities flow in and out of worlds and roles so have to adapt to be strong. Modern identities require us to be in a constant state of metamorphoses. That causes an ironic and conflicting situation for our sense of self and feeling of belonging. For us to come within reach of authenticity we need to find truth and strength in the adaptable and changeable nature of our fluid identifies rather than to be intimidated by it. This notion of fluidity is a recurring theme in Dorte's art and so is the concept of reflection.

Reflection influences our identity and engagement in the world. Dorte brings a sense of self-reflection into her work through the size, surface, form and materials that she uses. The highly polished bronze confronts the viewer with their reflected self many times on many different shapes and formats. The contrast between the bronze with raw natural materials such as wood to reflects the importance of the relationship between the human search for identity and the natural world.

Saligia+1 is her most resent piece. The installation is a contemporary version of The Seven Deadly Sins: Pride, Greed, Lust, Wrath, Gluttony Envy and Sloth. Even though the origin of the deadly sins grew out of the Egyptian monasteries around 100-400 AD, the essence of them remains an inherent part of our human nature. How we handle and balance the deadly sins defines our lives and becomes ingredients to our identity. Sins do not come in numbers or categories, hence the *Saligia+1*.

The sins are presented as the Shuar tribes in South America displayed the heads of defeated enemies on wooden poles. The Shuars decapitated, shrunk and sowed their enemies' heads to capture their soul and to take control of their power. Once the European colonialist arrived on the continent the shrunken heads became souvenirs and the Shuar tribe nearly drove themselves to extinction in order to satisfy the colonial demand. That situation captures a range of dilemmas, also present in the deadly sins, including a grotesque dilemma between origin and greed. Our identity is challenged by the emotions represented by the deadly sins - often a difficult, painful and balancing conflict symbolised by fallen rose petals.

DORTE KLOPPENBORG SKRUMSAGER

Born in Denmark, living and working in London since 1992
Member of The Royal British Society of Sculptures since 2013

EDUCATION

1990: CBS Copenhagen – BA Science
2012: Chelsea College of Art – BA Hons Art

EXHIBITIONS

2015: Darren Baker Gallery
2014: Encounter Fine Art – Launch Exhibition
2013: The Threadneedle Prize for Painting and Sculpture
2012: The METAFLUX Platform RA & RCA
2012: The Triangle Space – Chelsea College of Art
2010: Front Lawn Tate Britain - Half a Mile Radius
2010: The Red Gate Gallery – Brixton

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