



contemporary
british
painting

slippery & amorphous

11 January - 26 March 2016

The Crypt | St Marylebone Parish
Church | NW1 5LT

Phillip Allen | Simon Carter
Nadine Feinson | Paul Galyer
Paula MacArthur | James Petrucci
Alison Pilkington | Wendy Saunders
Ilona Szalay | Mimei Thompson



"For the painter, the codes and languages of painting, like the paint itself, are, by their very nature, slippery and amorphous." ROSA LEE, FROM HER ESSAY 'THREADS'

Opening reception: Thursday 14 January 6-8pm
Exhibition continues: Mon - Fri 9-5, Sat 9-4 (Sun closed)
Closing talk: Saturday 26 March 2-3 pm

contemporary british painting exhibition programme 2016. contemporarybritishpainting.com

Curated and organised by Wendy Saunders and Paula MacArthur
wendymrsaunders.co.uk | paula-macarthur.com

The Crypt is occasionally closed for private meetings, please check times 0207 935 7315

Slippery & Amorphous

Press Release

Paint is slippery stuff. Fluid and watery or viscous and buttery; it is difficult to handle and challenges the painter to control it, pin it down, fix it.

The painters in this exhibition draw parallels between the slipperiness of their medium and the slipperiness of their mode of expression. They attempt to communicate what is unseen, the things which are in flux, indefinable, even invisible and felt rather than known, learned or copied. Rosa Lee said in her 2003 essay * "...it is clear that the 'language' of painting does not readily lend itself to the making of direct statements. It is arguably an art of pure interpretation. For the painter, the codes and languages of painting, like the paint itself, are, by their very nature, slippery and amorphous. As a form of communication, it is invariably a very imprecise tool, prone to ambiguity and subsequent misreadings, if not downright incomprehension, from viewers... The problem, it seems, lies in the interpretive nature of 'meaning' in painting."*

Consciously avoiding didacticism, these painters offer honest expressions and seek an authentic response from the viewer. The language of painting, unlike literature, does not easily communicate definite statements; more akin to a musician's - the painter's process is improvised and more intuitive. It is often ambiguous and open to multiple or misinterpretations. These painters both imitate and invent; they do not rely on simply creating an illusion but allow it to collapse and dissolve. By omitting or actively erasing visual information, they allow the imagination to enter.

We are aware of the accretion of marks over time and get a sense of the gestures which created them. We can imagine ourselves moving as the artist moves while they pour, scrub, stroke and splash on the colour. We feel we have a glimpse into the mind of the artist and can share in their painterly investigations. The surfaces invite us to touch, or at least get up close to study the marks and adjustments. This provides an insight into how the surface may have shifted throughout its development.

Whilst the paint creates an illusion it is also unmistakably paint; in this way the painting gives us a window onto an imagined world and determinedly remains a concrete object. Flitting between imagination and the physical object, the viewer plays with the nature of perception. These paintings suggest improvisation both by artist and viewer; the viewer brings their own experience and imagination, translating what they see into their own internal language.

These painters explore the borderland between the real and the imagined; they give us just enough, the essentials we need to get a sense of the ideas they are investigating. However they don't offer us any direct answers, but rather encourage us to question both image and ourselves, making us aware that we only ever see through our own eyes, with our own accumulated history.

*Rosa Lee essay 'Threads' Chapter 6, Unframed ed. by Rosemary Betterton pub. I.B.Tauris 2004



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<http://www.contemporarybritishpainting.com/>

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