



STELLATUNDRA

PHILLIP ALLEN, HANNAH BEERMAN, MICHEL CEULERS, MARTIN CREED, TIM GARWOOD, MARIE HAZARD, JOHN HOYLAND, HILDA KORTEI, SADIE LASKA, CHRIS MARTIN, JONATHAN MCCREE, YASMINE ROBINSON. CURATION BY TIM GARWOOD.

November 23rd – December 16th, 2023

Sim Smith is delighted to announce STELLATUNDRA, a vibrant, career spanning exhibition of intergenerational artists exploring material dexterity and possibility in abstraction. Curated by gallery artist Tim Garwood the exhibition features work by Phillip Allen, Hannah Beerman, Michiel Ceulers, Martin Creed, Tim Garwood, Marie Hazard, John Hoyland, Hilda Kortei, Sadie Laska, Chris Martin, Jonathan McCree, Yasmine Robinson.

"The exhibition is a show of material dexterity, but it is more than that. It is a show about openness, receptiveness by an artist to what a work may become. I am interested in artists that are happy to let a work evolve in a very real way, in real time without any confines. Whilst many artists naturally follow the piece as it decides what it will ultimately be, some operate with a wider freedom that feels as though anything is.... allowed."

- Tim Garwood, November 2023

Each artist in this show is committed to exploring the possibilities of what a work may become. Relentless experimenters, their practice is often multifaceted, pushing the boundaries of their chosen mediums, frequently occupying additional realms outside of painting and reaching into sculpture, assemblage and performance. The exhibition spans work from the 1960's to today with references to Arte Povera and Art Brut to post-war European painting and Abstract Expressionism.

The exhibition explores the generosity of the artist for whom everything can become painting. Working in film, installation, painting, sculpture and performance, Jonathan McCree's work reflects a series of moments, the concept of potential, a space where anything can happen. For this exhibition, a sculpture was chosen, a glossy hot pink circle with a yellow peep hole cast in aluminium, looking like painted cardboard. The work is rooted in experience, actively destabilising ours and offering up a tension around truth, authenticity and value. Radiating lines of crosshatched yellow are painted on one of the gallery walls in Martin Creed's *Work No. 840*, a wall painting with lines 9 inches wide, executed using household tools and paints echoing a set of series, sequences, variations and rhythms that have become synonymous with his work. Creed is a master of interacting with people and places and in this exhibition, with the other artists in the space and making no separation between his work and everyday life - pushing audiences to reconsider their understanding of their experience.

There is a definite move away from the idea of creating precious objects and instead a pull towards a very vital communication, something immediate and real. This way of working breeds an aesthetic diversity and to-handiness of non-traditional materials that energises the work beyond the space of paint alone. Sequins, collaged newspaper and canvas drip with glitter in Chris Martin's work, in an almost cosmic painterly abstraction that offers up another dimension. His vernacular is as all-encompassing as the references within the work, taking us on a journey away from earth and up to the stars. A painter of intuition and spontaneity, Tim Garwood paints on glass, canvas and found textiles. Often gleaning materials from the streets and from his studio to construct paintings, the works are alive with a real and potent force. There is a work on glass in this exhibition, painted back to front including postage stamps, glitter, acrylic and spray paint in a burnt wood frame. As precious as the paintings can look, often sparkling and stirring after many applications of encrusted glitter and clouds of ink, the outcome instead is something more ethereal, a capturing of an energy that is hard to explain but seemingly familiar. In Hannah Beerman's work, each painting is intimately connected to her, her energy and space, her life, humour and honesty. Buckets, glitter, old found paintings, clay parts, photos of

friends' buttocks, all is fair game in Beerman's chronicles through assemblage and paint. Thematically, these artists reflect the cycles of their wide-ranging interests, personal life and environment from city streets to rural ecosystems, combining some autobiographical elements and everyday objects with a complex, yet recognisable language across materials that shouldn't work to make a painting, but do.

Curiosity sits at the centre of many of the artist's practices in this exhibition, curiosity and the openness to what a work may become. A certain liberation is afforded to the artist who is happy to explore materiality in a very real way. Phillip Allen's highly sculptural paintings not only include non-traditional materials (such as split peas in some of the works in this exhibition) but are also non-traditional in their non-conformity, they are not polite and do not fit within an easy idea of what a painting can or should be, instead they confront this conundrum head on. There is a restlessness to the artists in this exhibition, a want for more, to invent, to play, they all share an attitude towards making work that is constantly evolving. The result is an intensity of feeling that can be felt profoundly in the viewer. John Hoyland's work is exemplary in this way. As one of the most imaginative and resourceful abstract painters of the post-war period, works in this exhibition concentrate on the emotional power and sharpness of his work from the 1960's and on to the 1980's where Hoyland fully embraced the outcomes of chance. The work in this exhibition embodies the effects of this time where Hoyland relinquished control and allowed the paintings to naturally take their own form through pours, splashes and drips. Michiel Ceulers' works explore how the chance happening within a work, like stains, splashes, drips can become as important as found materials and paint. Often compiled discarded objects, each piece is imbued with a history from a previous life, a beauty that had once been disregarded. In this exhibition, the work is made partly of a kitchen cabinet door, depicting a budgerigar, the work is hung by the door's hinges suggesting the forward movement as if the bird was seated on a swinging perch. An opportunist and magpie of sorts, Yasmine Robinson's works share a predilection for objects that would have had a previous life before making their way into her hands. Paintings are often stuffed and seams almost split open, creating works that sit somewhere between paintings and sculpture, somewhere between the old and the new. Working from scraps of previous unsuccessful paintings and found materials, Hilda Kortei works across installation of found objects and painting. Kortei, tests each works' ability and performance in the studio, stitching and slashing canvases, coating surfaces in multiple colours creating hazy illusions in paint.

This abundance of energy in a practice often leaves quite obvious remnants of the works' making by the artists' hand. The making of multiples, the energy of the studio and embracing the uncertain opens doors to a beautifully intense and sometimes chaotic splendour. Ready-made mass-produced flags are Sadie Laska's material of choice for this exhibition, collaged and cut images sewn on by hand. Punkish and badge-like, scrappy, often Laska chooses Earth flags as grounds on which to build her compositions. There is an immediacy to these works, to their composition, momentum, and strength, a breaking with conventions of association and a reconstruction of interpretive possibilities. The manual work is not just evident but intense in Marie Hazard's tapestries. Concentrated and all consuming, her work requires hours and hours of absorption at the loom. The physical act of weaving leads to Hazard symbolically intertwining different concepts and sources, small drawings, printed photographs, and poems are intertwined with twists of wool and over 5000 hand sewn glass pearls that hang from woven fronds in her work on show.

There is a vigorous liberality to this exhibition, a generosity that sits at the core of each artists' practice and a curation by an artist who is fully immersed in this way of thinking. The abundant making of works naturally creates a distance from an easy sort of beauty and moves instead towards a potent and primal instinct. These works live and are living, extensions of the artists themselves; they are curious, sometimes accidental, immediate, truthful, instantaneous, and messy. They are a bombardment of momentum, energy, and influences, soaking up the world and spitting it out through the eyes of an artist who sees potential and possibility in everything.

Visitor Information

Private View: Thursday October 23rd, 6.30pm

General Admission: Open Friday 10 am - 4pm and Saturday 11am – 5pm and by appointment

Address: Sim Smith, 6 Camberwell Passage, London, SE5 0AX

Nearest London Stations: Oval (Northern Line), Denmark Hill (London Overground and Thameslink) or Loughborough Junction (London Overground and Thameslink)

Nearest Bus Stop: Camberwell Green (F), bus numbers 35, 40, 42, 45 and Warner Road (J and H) bus numbers 36, 185, 436, N136

T + 44 (0) 7920102284 | E mail@sim-smith.com | W sim-smith.com

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