

ALICE AMATI

THE BELLY AND THE GUTS

Louise Giovanelli

Tommy Harrison

Robin Megannity

Fischer Mustin

Rafal Topolewski

Curated in collaboration with Dr Ian Hartshorne

13 JULY – 25 AUGUST, 2023

27 WARREN STREET
W1T 5NB LONDON

Painting Matters.

The painters in this show all graduated from Manchester School of Art, I have had the wonderful privilege to teach all of them. That they are all exhibiting together represents the first time a contemporary gallery has had the radical foresight to present a group of artists who all foreground matters arising from within painting itself.

Alice Amati has made an audacious move by inviting these artists, which acknowledges that something worth considering is happening in Manchester regarding painting, and that building a bridge between art school and art world is urgent and timely.

Robin Megannity produces paintings that on a granular level are simultaneously thinking, feeling and touching. Through him, the paintings reflect that after postmodernism's successful demolition of authorship, the issue for artists now seems to be recontextualisation – not only from analogue to digital but the recontextualisation of arts own history and its function within a contemporary context.

Louise Giovanelli is a stunning example of an ultra contemporary artist whose approach to painting addresses how all too often, painting falls victim to being theorized, whilst its aesthetic dimension is ignored. She casts this apparent veto directly in the bin. The obvious intelligence in the work all comes through her hands. There is a gold cable connection between her eyes and fingers; the results are chapters (series) of high impact statements of tender, perverted, and embarrassingly beautiful painting passages, which always avoid mawkishness.

The emerging career to Tommy Harrison develops paintings which pugnaciously approach upskilling and reject awkwardness. Why and how did awkwardness gain so much currency these past 20 years? Surely there's enough of it already? We don't need any more. His recent paintings speak to the idea that the Post/Meta? Modern era is an extremely confusing time. We are no longer living in a simple age where definitions and categories are easily assigned. Harrison's work gives a reliable account of the contemporary conditions and surroundings that we now inhabit, and state the importance of resisting outright nostalgia. He consciously avoids an overt referencing to a 'golden age' of painting and instead fuses together a constructed amalgam of historical and contemporary motifs.

Similarly but much more weirdly, more metabolically, Fisher Mustin regards painting as part of us, part of our histories, as such; important work is ahead- to preserve painting but exploit it too. Painting in the West appears to be a tradition and product of a

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collective culture, it is a tradition built from a rich heritage of memories, and obsessions and the allure and fascination with painting is alive and well, if only we know where to look. It's a problem of looking.

Of all the artists in this show, Rafal Topolewski is the most travelled, certainly the most moved around. He may well state 'There is much to discover?' And as his continental meanderings align with his painterly journey, painting may well be a country, though one with a long history of occupation. Various ideologies, systems and identities are established only to be subsequently dismantled, which never feel secure from future attacks. How does this country begin to function when at last it is liberated? How does it regain its identity? Or perhaps find its essence in the wake of its troubled history? Well...keep looking.

The artists in this show reposition painting as primarily a material and physical act, human, real, sensorial and seductive. Thereby promoting a return towards certainty, a certainty that will finally re-establish the importance of making and looking.

They all deal with matters of painting because painting matters.

Text by Dr Ian Hartshorne

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Louise Giovannelli (b.1993, London, UK) lives and works in Manchester (UK). She completed her postgraduate studies at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main (DE) with professor Amy Sillman in 2020, after having earned a Bachelor's Degree (B.A. Hons, Fine Art) at the Manchester School of Art, Manchester (UK) in 2015. She has solo exhibitions at Moon Grove, Manchester (UK); Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool (UK); White Cube, London (UK); GRIMM, New York, NY (US); Frutta Gallery, Rome (IT); Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester (UK) amongst others. Her work was also included in group exhibitions at The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY (US); Kasmin, New York, NY (US); Marlborough, London (UK); Hayward Gallery, London (UK); Akzo Nobel Art Foundation, Amsterdam (NL); C.L.E.A.R.I.N.G., Brooklyn, NY (US), among others. Giovannelli's work can be found in the collections of the AkzoNobel Art Foundation (NL); The Grundy Gallery Collection (UK); Hall Art Foundation (DE, US); The Hepworth Wakefield (UK); Hill Art Foundation (US); Hort Family Collection (US); Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (US); Manchester Art Gallery Collection (UK); MOCA, Los Angeles (US); The National Museum (NO); The UK Government Art Collection (UK); Whitworth Art Gallery (UK) among others.

Tommy Harrison (b. 1996, Stockport, UK) is currently studying for an MFA in painting at the Manchester School of Art (2021-23), for which he received in 2020 the Haworth Trust Painting Scholarship. In May 2023 he had a solo exhibition at GRIMM in New York (USA), and in 2022 he had a solo exhibition titled Frozen Mid-Melt at Pipeline Contemporary, London (UK). Harrison's work has been included in group exhibitions at Chapelle de l'Humanité, Paris (FR); Islington Mill, Salford (UK); Elysium Gallery, Swansea (UK) where he was shortlisted for the Beep International Painting Prize; Bankley Gallery, Manchester (UK); and Holden Gallery, Manchester (UK).

Robin Megannity (b.1985, North-West, UK) is based in Greater Manchester, UK. He completed his MA in Painting at Manchester, School of Art in 2021 and received a BA in Fine Art at University of Wales Institute, Cardiff in 2007. Megannity has exhibited nationally and internationally, selected solo exhibitions include *ferme la fenêtre*, Kristian Day Gallery, London, UK (2021); *Goes Without Saying*, Bunker Gallery, Manchester, UK (2019); and *Compression*, Studios Gallery, New Mills, UK (2014). Selected Group exhibitions include *Fayre Share Fayre*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2022); *In Crystallized Time*, Museum Of Museums, Seattle, USA (2021); *ONE*, Subsidiary Projects, San Mei Gallery, London, UK (2021); *The Contact Layer*, curated by Ian Gonczarow, Stewart Hall, Montreal, CA (2020); and *Unfamiliar Handshake*, The Function Suite, curated by Brian Mountford, London, UK (2020).

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Fischer Mustin (b.1998) is a London-based artist. He is currently pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, building upon his previous academic achievement of a BA with Honors in Fine Art from Manchester School of Art. Fischer was the recipient of the Freelands Foundation Painting Prize (2020) and the Edna Rose Weiss Award (2023). Fischer's works have been included in exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts (2023), Sadie Coles (2022), Freelands Foundation (2020), PS Mirabel, Manchester (2019), and OA Studios, Manchester (2018).

Rafal Topolewski (b.1983 Grudziadz, Poland) lives and works in Lisbon. He studied Fine Art at the Royal Academy Schools (London, UK) and at the Manchester Metropolitan University. Recent exhibitions include: 'Becoming Creature', Tabula Rasa Gallery, London (UK), 'Castelet', Simo Bacar, Lisbon (2022), 'Corpo e Mente', curated by Lawrence Van Hagen, Palazzo Barbaro, Venice (2022); 'If Not, Winter', Simo Bacar, Lisbon (2022); 'Isle, Lewis Hammond and Rafal Topolewski', Smart Objects, Los Angeles (2018); 'Terraforms', The Concept Space, London (2018); 'Adolf Menzel's Foot', PS Mirabel, Manchester (2017); 'Fully Awake', Blip Blip Blip, Leeds (2017); 'Royal Academy Show', Royal Academy Schools, London (2016); 'Premiums', Royal Academy of Arts, London (2015) amongst others.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Ian Hartshorne is Head of Painting and M.A Painting course leader at Manchester School of Art. He trained for his M.A at Chelsea College of Art and was a Stanley Picker fellow at Kingston University and a subsequent Boise Scholar at The Slade School, London. He completed a PhD, which investigated the affect on our social memories in relation to digital production methods. He has exhibited extensively across U.S.A and Europe. He is a founder member of the Teaching Painting organisation, a coalition of educators, which explores the relationship between teaching and painting - hosting conferences, publications, exhibitions and workshops. He recently completed curating a six-part exhibition cycle called 'Fully Awake' which brought together 72 institutions and 238 artists in an intergenerational sequence of shows; visiting six U.K venues. He is also co-editor of the book 'Teaching Painting: How can painting be taught in British art schools?' Published by Black Dog press.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Alice Amati is a contemporary art gallery established in Fitzrovia in June 2023. The gallery is committed to fostering artists at the early stages of their career by often providing the opportunity for their first solo show in the city and a supportive context for artistic explorations and career development. Concerned with encouraging transnational dialogues around topical questions within society and art, Alice Amati brings together British and International artists through a challenging, experimental and rigorous exhibitions programme. Joining a cohort of young and established galleries in the burgeoning artistic scene of Fitzrovia, Alice Amati operates as a platform for new voices in the contemporary global artistic scene with a strong commitment to research, collaboration and diverse practices.

For more information, sales enquiries, interview and image requests please contact: info@aliceamati.com