

ON THE  
THICK AND THIN  
OF PAINTING

Cross Lane Projects  
18 July — 19 September, 2026

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Conceived by British painter Daniel Sturgis, *On the Thick and Thin of Painting* explores the materiality of the medium, its physical and ethereal boundaries, and the enduring subculture of abstraction.

The exhibition is framed as a visual dialogue between nine artists’ work, where the title refers to how each artist navigates the formal and conceptual densities of paint. Whether applied with full-bodied gusto, delicate slightness, or felt through its absence, the “thick and thin” of the exhibition’s title serves as a metaphor for how each artist uses an idea of paint to position their work against art history, the contemporary moment, and the belief in painting as a critical and durable medium.

Featuring Phillip Allen, Tom Benson, Glenn Brown, Cecilia Charlton, Martina Geccelli, Alexis Harding, Fiona Rae, Daniel Sturgis, and Hayley Tompkins.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition, *On the Thick and Thin of Painting*, at Cross Lane Projects, Kendal (18 July – 19 September 2026).

Established in 2018 by Rebecca Scott and Mark Woods, Cross Lane Projects is an artist-run space presenting new and exciting contemporary art in Kendal.

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## Notes for an Exhibition / Daniel Sturgis

On the thickness and thinness of paint

On the actual stuff of painting

On abstraction as subculture

On gestures

On the handmade

On the analogue

On the trace of the hand or brush

On the warp and weft of threads

On support as foundation

On weaving as painting

On painting as support

On substrates

On the hardness and porosity of grounds

On histories as ground

On pigments bound in oil

On pigment held in binders

On pigment as dye

On colours from culture

On colour in nature

On silver bromide as pigment on paper

On lean over fat

On the instability of materials

On painting sculpture

On painting as index

On plasticity

On earth and clay

On conversations between artworks

On conversations between artists

On paintings as representations of paintings

On abstraction as representation

On the thickets and thin woods of painting<sup>1</sup>

Daniel Sturgis

April 2026

1. The first recorded use of the term 'thick and thin' is in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387–1400). In the *Reeve's Tale* a horse is described running through different types of wooded terrain.

Detail of Alexis Harding, *Doubling (Poles)*, 2026,  
oil and gloss paint on aluminium, 62 x 89cm





## *On pleasure and unpredictability, on acting and waiting, on surprise and the accidental*

Martin Holman

As a visual language, abstraction continues to build its vocabulary. Proof of its vitality resides in the practices of the artists in this exhibition. These assorted positions, brought together by the painter Daniel Sturgis, follow an awareness of arriving late in the evolution of this idiom long after its conventions, most notably in the form of the movement called modernism, were established or even codified.

“I see that abstraction must now be open to change,” Sturgis says, “and set against modernist certainty, decisiveness and authority. Exploring the humanness of touch, and the physicality of making is one route, and a joyous notion.”

In the preparation of this essay, the artists in this show have spoken about how their use of materials cannot be separated from the wider context of making, which starts with an idea. Nonetheless, the physical and often sensuous involvement with paint, clay, thread and with gravity and surface, stimulates freedom from the objective demands of the visible world, giving each artist license to invent, react, submit and transgress. Moreover, reflection on art history, which, after all, Sturgis sees as “just another material”, is inseparable from handling among the pleasure derived from working in this physical and intellectual realm that constitutes abstraction.

Perhaps the most tangible expression of an engagement with matter is found in the almost epicurean surfaces of **Phillip Allen**’s paintings. “A painting paints itself,” Allen says, “you don’t paint it ... it acquires the vibes of a painting without being painted.” This artist refers to what he does by the present, active tense of the verb (“I paint” he says) rather than by the noun “painter”. That engagement endows his work with what he calls a “visual buzz”, an idea he aligns with the concept of the “objective transcendental” put forward by Michel Serres. The French philosopher, whose ideas interest Allen, proposes that knowledge is conveyed materially through the senses and not only by the mind, to facilitate human experience.

Spilling over the edges of the boards he works on like a cakey, integrated frame are clotted mounds of coloured, viscous paint. This mix of oil and acrylic emulsion engulfs the rectilinear shape of each painting’s

support to project into the viewer’s visual and actual space. “For me, material pushes the ‘boat’ of painting like a wind,” Allen says about this remarkable and agreeably whimsical tumescence. It seems to be in dialogue with the centre ground it surrounds, an area where paint is less dense and flatter, yet still a reservoir of material surprises and formal dynamism.

“I like to play with paint, to explore it,” he says. By mixing split peas into the acrylic emulsion, Allen can replicate the granular inconsistency of the polystyrene sheeting he used to paint on almost a decade ago. He also liked the rough, beady surface, which offered “bite,” he says “and slowed everything down into a grungy, nasty, coagulated” effect. Taking up board again this decade, he layers marble dust in the central part of these paintings as the foundation for the swirling, calligraphic marks he paints on top. The dust is mixed into glaze medium. The combination responds to the play of surrounding light that actuates the shapes themselves.

Pictures (a word this artist favours) emerge from a rich interplay of inspirations. They come from the world around him that is saturated with visual, aural as well as taste sensations for an artist endowed at birth with a sweet tooth. The shapes have the quality of parodied motifs and meet Allen’s need to fill the centre “with something of interest” without having to be more graphically specific. Their origins lie in the early 2000s, when the globs of squeezed oil paint occupied only thin boarders at the top and bottom of images, and the compositions in the more thinly painted interior reflected his ardent consumption of the techniques of his models among modernist artists, figures such as František Kupka or Robert Delaunay. A phase followed when he mixed two practices simultaneously by also making paintings distinguished by their flatness. Now, he says, “The push and pull with other [artists’] work is a bit more insular, and

the swirl has emerged as a solution to filling the gap.” With this decade, the shuffle between figure and ground has again predominated; moreover, the intensification of these features in this latest work has the force of a revival carried along with renewed conviction.

Regular drawing with felt pens on off-white sheets of paper has long been a channel for ideas. Pinned around the walls of his studio are drawings selected from almost 25 years of production. The link between drawing and painting has graduated from linear, when once drawing automatically preceded and triggered painting, to circular with painting prompting manoeuvres that feed back into drawing. “The push and pull with other [artists’] work is now a bit more insular, and the swirl has emerged as a solution to filling the gap,” he says.

The nature of his brushstroke is partly prompted by how pens flow over the A3-format sheets with a shiny coating that he now reserves for drawing. “The spiralling marks came about consciously, and, in the painting, I’ve tried to recapture the mark made by a felt pen about to run out and which you need to press down on to get a line.” The radical shift from paint rich in linseed oil to raw pigments in glaze medium is equally significant. The move has lightened and expanded his palette and introduced the matte finish with its fresco-like feel, that delivers that sought-after brake on gestural brushwork.

In contrast with Allen’s maximal approach, **Daniel Sturgis** emphasises the reduction of manual gesture in his painting while simultaneously advocating for the sensibility expressed in the humanness of touch. From a distance, the technical precision of his practice may lead the viewer to conclude that the surface has been rendered by a machine or, at least, laid down with a stencil or masking tape. An initial appraisal of Sturgis’s deployment of motifs, such as grids and silhouettes, suggests popular post-war genres of bold and brightly coloured print design, that infiltrated the home as mass-produced coverings and decoration.

Closer inspection, however, upsets that comparison. The assumed regularity of the composition is disrupted by subtle shifts in symmetry. “What at first looks simple, reveals itself to be less so,” he says. “A matte line might intersect with one in gloss, throwing out first impressions of consistent flatness. And the colours generate some instability. They come from our urban culture, nature, from packaging and the computer screen. But the combinations surprise you because they are slightly unharmonious or imbalanced. So, there is a kind of flux which optically alters what is seen. You think you get it before you actually do.”

In these divergences lie Sturgis’s conception of materiality, not a physical build-up of matter but a question of carefully selected, unemotional yet active adjacencies. This sensitivity encompasses gesture. It is manifest in the movement of the hand-held brush, so fluent as to be imperceptible at first. Then it is apparent, for instance, where edges abut and along the length of the main overlapping verticals and horizontals. Subordinate lines, which look like shallow shading, upset logic to swap places above and below.

With careful, sustained looking, the surface of this artist’s paintings opens for the viewer into the network of calibrated irregularities he has constructed. It destabilises expectations of the painted area, as no longer a rationalist design but one prone to further change from the canvas’s actual surroundings. The atmospheric of light and movement energise the variegated paint finishes into a subtle optical play of spatial allusions, enhancing in the process the composition’s formal instabilities and the work’s conceptual core. This tendency is enhanced when Sturgis works in series, multiple canvases that are in close dialogue with each other. In this case, similarly proportioned grids migrate between differently sized and scaled paintings, further complicating expectations.

As with Sturgis, a striking characteristic of the work of **Tom Benson** is how it encourages the viewer to engage with its internal syntax of edges, boundaries, surface and colour. An artist who is not reliant on only one technique and whose output involves photography, book projects and object making as well as painting, Benson starts with a question or preoccupation. He then selects the idiom that will enable him to carry an idea through to a meeting point with the viewer that stimulates a response.

His conceptually creative approach, therefore, can take diverse forms, as is seen in this exhibition: a photographic print that may best be described as depicting a freewheeling line traversing the area of its own image, and an arrangement of nine closely-spaced vertical coloured panels that together form a larger rectangle. One similarity is that both are wall-mounted, visibly so with the photograph conventionally framed while the panels mildly test presentational orthodoxy by each being vertically fastened by two steel pins that push the panels slightly away from the wall. Another similarity is that they both recast materiality in terms of perception.

Like Sturgis, Benson offers a visual proposition about the identity of these works: are they smoothly machined and finished industrial products or unique, hand-made artworks? That ambiguity engenders a closer examination which reveals both as registering actions, in different temporalities, rather than outcomes. The photographed length of wire exists as a mechanical representation of a gesture executed in the past. It twists in its progress, passes under, and elsewhere over, as it crosses itself exhibiting unanticipated subtleties of form. Then, with the group of small coloured panels, the eye scrutinises the structure of surface and colour, the grid formation, the wafer-like density of metal, and the paint skin as impeccable as a sprayed car body.

Passing between one aluminium panel and another, the mind wonders how each relates to the whole, gradually grasping how those factors interconnect – and move on to fertilise the gallery’s architecture and location between town and country. The spectator’s attention fixes on to the visual and intellectual wavelengths that the work seems to transmit. Reflection may follow on personal lived experience, on the immediate physical space, and on the dappling of light on the natural colours which the work implies, found in the landscape.

The panels are closely aligned but do not touch. So,

awareness spreads like ink dropped in water of how the eye conjures imagined additional colours from the interaction of the tones either side, above below. Each unit is hung on two steel pins so that it projects slightly from the wall. Only light and air penetrate the space behind, and they coalesce with even the onlooker’s breath to release a rhythm of shimmers across some or all the panels.

As such, the room gently activates the painted surface with a disembodied gesture, altering however subtly how the ensemble looks with each moment, keeping the work active and current. A notable feature of Benson’s practice is the degree of detachment he maintains. In comparison with the other artists in this exhibition, his physical intervention is the least demonstrated. Taking a length of wire in his hand, he moved it through a sequence generated more by muscle memory than conscious expression: he signed his own name. Benson asked himself how little he need do to set in motion a process that will culminate in a visual event and absorb his viewer’s attention.

The combination of conscious and instinctual movement also resonates through the painting process of **Alexis Harding**. His practice is built on the incompatibility of the chemical properties of his materials. The direction that a painting will follow is triggered when household gloss emulsion paint is poured in a systematic manner by the artist over a flat layer of oil paint to create two co-extensive fields. Whereas oil paint consists of coloured pigment, itself an inorganic compound suspended in a medium of linseed oil, gloss emulsion is a formulation of synthetic pigment, resin, solvents and other elements. The distinctive appearance of Harding’s paintings is derived from the failure of the two substances to adhere instantly. Instead, the layers establish an uneasy cohabitation, drying at different speeds over weeks as they touch and jell into semi-autonomous strata, separated by their variable densities of solidness and liquidity.

The process is made more complex and intense by Harding’s habit of mixing three or four different brands of gloss paint. Since each has its own balance of ingredients and binding agents, uncertainty increases about how the paints will behave together. He also varies the amount of linseed medium in the oil element, judging by eye and recalling quantities that produced effects he liked in the past. The layers can be poured thickly or thinly, quickly or slowly. The stripe effect comes from passing a perforated length of gutter, loaded with coloured emulsions, over the monochrome bed of oil paint.

Harding observes the unfolding behaviours of these layers, anticipating when to interrupt and pre-empt the materials’ intrinsic progress. “There is a strangeness, an intimacy about the material,” he says. “I don’t measure out the oil-based ground, which is the receiver of everything else that follows, or the procedural actions at the start or the irrational, ridiculous interventions at the end. Together they make the thing work and defeat my expectations.”

Harding alludes to the conglomeration of paint as feeling “alive”. As the upper gloss layer congeals it

contracts into a cohesive, all-over texture of ripples or wrinkles. The skin sits stolidly on the slowly stiffening bed of oil, from which it feels incrementally less inclined to peel. “I allow the surface to seal and then go in and cut with a blade. This feels like drawing or suturing. Then I pull with my hands, often in two directions simultaneously. It seems primitive. Accidents and splits occur and I feel this happening without seeing through my fingers.”

These episodes happen quickly and follow long intervals of waiting, procrastination and reflection. “I was taught to be interdisciplinary and have an indifference to representation and abstraction.” The formation of the surface that his audience witnesses might appear spontaneous and immediate. In fact, it is hard won, with a huge expense in time and effort by the artist. Paradox stalks Harding’s work; it is part of its allure. Moreover, the internal material conflict ensures that, to varying degrees, the painting continues to make itself after it has left the studio. Harding refers to this time-based process as encompassing complementary dialogues. “The materials mix different histories of paint and colour: emulsion is commercial while oil speaks of painting’s traditions. And as the skins stretch and wrinkle, their aging is almost bodily. So pictorial echoes emerge, no question, bringing a psychological charge to the bunched symmetry, for instance, in a diptych. You can follow the paint’s trajectory across the surface, where it might continue to go.”

**Martina Geccelli** also precipitates a dramatic chain of actions. Working with clay, this artist explores the material’s contrasting properties of constructive strength and fragility, building up forms and breaking them down in order to reconstruct differently. As with Harding, short episodes of spontaneous action are interspersed with periods of waiting, enforced by the needs of her raw material to dry and cook with kiln firing. In those intervals she reflects on her actions and on where the composition might move next.

Like Harding she works on a small number of objects in the studio concurrently, moving back and forth between each. Looking and handling is integral to the process that, as she puts it, “entails coming and going and doing”. Indeed, Geccelli eschews the term “composition”, as it implies planned moves towards completion, in favour of the more organic idea of “growth” unfettered by notions of a finish point. That phrase captures more evocatively the process of intuitive action and response that characterises her practice.

Such growth leads to an object that is “very abstract”, she says, lacking reference to the known world and avoiding any concept of unity. Geccelli trained as an architect before studying sculpture. Consequently, she has experience of organising interior volumes and external surfaces, and how such spaces interrelate. Working with flat sheets or extrusions of clay, her method stresses the body’s interaction with the play between spatial dimensions present from the start. After modelling the open shape like a vessel, a staple of ceramics used here for its formal convenience, she applies gravity by pressing or

leaning into the top or side of the still pliable material.

After the first firing, during which more distortions might occur as gases expand in heat, Geccelli makes further alterations. These include throwing the vessel to the floor or hitting it with a bat. The artist decides which actions are appropriate while assessing how much the emerging object interests her. She describes this stage as “movement with a bit of control. Clay is a sensual material,” she continues, “and when the hand is involved, there is more interest for me. I have to deal with the damage done and work with it”.

Non-objective consciousness capitalises on accidents, taking the object further away from familiar concepts of sculpture “to reach a form independent of me,” she says. Then it will become exclusively the thing itself. As that awareness develops and after the second firing the original vessel appears as a multiplicity of surfaces, “in which notions of beauty or tradition have no place.”

At this stage Geccelli introduces colour, seemingly applied quickly as paint and glazing to the clay’s natural organic tone. Geccelli assesses how much to add and where. Dipping is out of the question since colour appears in patches, some of which give the impressions of coming from the hidden space inside the work. Colour also helps animate the object’s presence in the round. The glazing modifies the diversity of textures circulating around the persistently non-continuous nature of the surface, so that surrounding atmospherics of light and space promote a subtly changing apprehension of forms.

Echoing Sturgis, Geccelli recognises that: “One is always part of art history.” “But I have to be careful,” she adds, “not to be too traditional. For instance, if a shape appears which could have been done in the 1960s... I ask myself what is different now to that time, what can I add or bring?”

And like Benson and Harding, she submits to chance at each formative stage. Chance delivers surprise and uncertainty, necessitating a response from the artist that extends to the viewer’s engagement. “I wanted to leave the emotional rigidity of Minimalism... A mixture of personality comes into play with control, and fun is a challenge. I need to see where the form is going and for it not to make sense.”

**Cecilia Charlton**’s practice moved from painting to working with weaving and embroidery. “For me,” she says, “working with textiles is to work with materials and processes that have agency and a sense of their own embodiment. I think of myself as a facilitator... at most, working with textiles is an act of cooperation, it is not for the practitioner to drive the materials into submission. I like to find ways of giving up control.”

Geometric abstraction was a feature of her painting that she transferred to the textile idiom of bargello embroidery. In common with many thread-based techniques, like knitting, weaving and quilting, this technique is built upon the principle of the grid. A coincidental emblem of modernism as well as a formal and ideological device, the grid retains its potential for radical practices.

Charlton can modify the grid by varying how a stitched or woven object is presented by, for instance, hanging it in the round to expose front and back surfaces to the effects of space, light and air. An alternative is to gather and drape the fabric over the bow of a line, an action that renders “casual” the formal geometric integrity of the composition. In this way, Charlton engages creatively with several languages, derived from contrasting art forms and supposed functions. “Working with textiles in general,” she says, “feels like an inheritance of knowledge.”

“Contrary to almost every other medium I’ve worked with,” she says, “you can pretty much erase anything you want, at any time.” Removing stitches effectively resets the canvas to its original state, leaving no trace of the marks removed. Yet the concept of gesture is relevant. Charlton’s definition corresponds with Sturgis’s attitude in his unhurried, precise application of ribbons of paint: “Spontaneity, similar to gesture, is often assumed to happen quickly,” she says. “But why? I question whether gestures need to be fast. Textiles have a high degree of tactility.”

“In my work,” she continues, “every fibre has passed through my fingers numerous times. I have to believe that this results in some kind of transference of experience between myself and the material, myself and the viewer.” Material associations proliferate with the home and clothing, and with making that is literally hands on, and unmediated by tools, mirroring the woven realities of canvas and making so apposite to painting.

The relationship between real life and **Fiona Rae**’s paintings, however, may appear almost as close and familiar. Skeletal rectilinear shapes suggest letter forms incorporated into flamboyant, multicoloured compositions. They extend horizontally in linear intervals throughout the picture plane, raising the possibility of being interpreted, rather in the manner of logos in the contemporary affluent, brand-saturated culture.

For the new work in this exhibition from her currently on-going *Word* series, she explains, “I have set myself the challenge of writing a sentence from literature or poetry or popular culture, using the language of abstraction and without attempting to represent or embody the meaning of that particular phrase. My hope is that the convergence of the two language systems means that something unusual and unexpected can occur.”

With the viewer’s exposure to the skirmish of marks, colours and incipient figuration, the prospect of legibility falls away. “I improvise directly onto the paper and find that one mark or gesture leads to another, that the group of marks might end up behaving as ephemeral moments of abstraction or as sculptural beings, or something else altogether.”

Thus, there is a perceived interconnection between elements of mark, colour and structure that is independent of meaning. Marks reach out in multiple directions simultaneously, in a snakes-and-ladders fashion that follows its own rules. “I’ve always thought of the act of painting as a conversation or even an argument. One mark responds to another, disagrees, adds something

new, repeats or denies. The resulting painting is a picture of the conversation.”

The *Word* series relates to ideas about text, alphabets, ideograms, hieroglyphs and other writing systems by which concrete information is communicated, modified and overwhelmed. “I take the idea of the indecipherable and the unknowable existing within language, despite its function as a tool of understanding.” Loosely calligraphic details, awash in abstract marks, have shed their most describable features to become, as Rae says, “potential abstract paintings within an abstract painting, representing a collapse in scale with their dense configurations of marks and shapes.”

As with a page of text, each gathering of marks sits on a roughly linear structure. The *Word* series reflects what she calls “an on-off relationship with grids over the years. The sense of an overriding structure, no matter how hidden, can be both reassuring and provide the opportunity for disobedience,” taking directions that contest the conventions of modernism while staying within their general ambit. “The framework, the idea for a painting ... needs to be in place, or chaos and despair will surely ensue. Surprise and chance are ever present. Nothing works out the way I think it will and I always have to adapt, cover my tracks or jump in a different direction.”

“I love the malleability of oil paint,” Rae says, and the surface coheres through the interplay of colour, mark and structure. “Surface is very important – I always paint with the understanding that the viewer might well come within a few centimetres, so I try to make sure that the surface rewards close-up inspection.”

In the last five years, **Hayley Tompkins** has been making works on paper laid flat on a tabletop or in a sketchbook. She has never exhibited them, but they have had a formative influence on the direction of her painting since returning to working with a brush on panel. That followed a period when she eliminated the brushmark by pouring paint into shallow plastic trays and agitating its surface by hand.

On paper the marks are now explosive, sometimes repeated and reminiscent of the American painter Joan Mitchell. “The process is self-conscious and,” she says “is very much connected to reading. I drop into myself and can connect with feelings that make it easier to reach places where the work feels untethered.” Although they are not studies for painting but unique entities, some translation invariably takes place between paper and panel. “They create a lot of energy,” she says, “to take into panel pieces, with the mark independent, free and unpredictable.”

The panels are prepared with gesso to provide a white, grain-less surface similar to paper. She starts with a loose, rapidly made line, calligraphic in nature and able to loop or stutter into staccato steps. Colour is based on sensation: not a dominant hue, like red, but muted, such as in a grey, pink or moss green. “What I bring,” she says, “is the body, leading to the arm and then the brush. The colour on the end of the brush is not the most important thing. Instead, personal energy is needed to keep me

coming back, and the emotional energy comes from how I feel – sad or excited or unwell,” giving the artist an elusive presence in the work.

Tompkins has referred to the surface that emerges as a “psychic envelope”, in which she can recall events in her life when paintings were made. The onlooker does not need to know that background; it has specific significance only for the artist. To that degree colour carries the mark of time: “you can’t stop yourself using your colour instinct and it allows the self to be present. Painting can take anything – anxiety, fear, sadness – but mine won’t be coming out gloomy. I do not have to stand back and restrain myself. In painters like Matisse and Mitchell, or Camille Pissarro, it is the sense of daring I admire, which can be both bold and gentle.”

A feature of her new paintings is the presence of rectangles that float on the picture plane. They obliterate some of the actions that built up the image in brushy, lively strokes just visible below. “The rectangles are an idea, a kind of snare, that envelops time. With their neat edges, they also take pressure away from the paint work beneath by not being emotional but detached, the start of little rhythms and repetitions. Paintings are made over three or four weeks, and the rectangles happen days before I finish.”

“I keep thinking of paintings holding time and stopping time. In fact, I have wanted to hang a watch on a branch I painted and make artworks with clocks on them. Works are fed by feelings and life experiences, by a sense of how things are when I paint. The viewer doesn’t need to know them: they find their own subject matter.” As they do with the objects that Tompkins often puts together with her paintings.

Phones, knives, a hammer are among the objects she has found in the real world and co-opted into her painted environment. All relate to the person, having been handled, picked up or have been worn near the hand by someone, as with the shirt sleeve cut short near the cuff. A dense film of paint erases their identity, a practice that enables Tompkins to get to know them formally, raising the commonplace article to wider visibility and types of enquiry.

“The first object was a stick,” she says, “because it resembled a written line or a brushstroke. I love the portability of these finds, the efficiency and speed with which I gather material on a walk, just as my son did when he was small. The result is a little surreal and sets up an otherworldly quality I like, through their adjacency with the conventions of painting, the studio and so on.”

**Glenn Brown** describes himself as a painter. Nonetheless he has a well-established commitment to making that extends into three-dimensional forms. As an object, *Morbid Fancies* (2025) may appear at odds with painterly practice. In fact, it accords directly with Brown’s studio processes over recent years, especially when it comes to merging found compositions, in unrelated Old Master drawings, for instance, to create new shapes and perspectives.

Appropriating an existing artwork, Brown specialises in overturning the essential properties of, perhaps, the

rich impasto of a work by Frank Auerbach. The source is reconceptualised, nowhere more apparent than in his denial of the material qualities of paint and facture. Brown re-renders the surface as sheer flatness, like a poor mechanical reproduction, badly matched for colour.

Talking about his striking amalgam of sculpture and paint, Brown says: “The sculpture is a nineteenth-century copy of a sculpture by Antonio Canova [the Italian Neoclassical sculptor who pioneered a calm, graceful style]. It has been in my studio and on the go for about six years.” Paint is built up in layers, with the first comprising acrylic mixed with a medium, which dries to a stable, strong body and then is completely covered by the next layer. “After I am more or less happy with the build-up of the shape, I start applying oil paint, which is quite thick in places... The underlying paint has to dry before applying new layers. It probably never fully dries in the deep areas. It is not varnished, no driers or mediums are added to the oil paint, and it remains very fragile.”

“The figure,” Brown continues, “as the title implies, is being suffocated whilst being decorated and enhanced.” The material becomes the channel for diverse haptic sensations, articulated where edges touch, and where soft paint meets the hardness of stone. Yet Brown has also treated the materiality of this painted augmentation with great precision. Both visually and sculpturally, the form, colour and surface are built up with extreme care in closely orchestrated sequences, as subtle as any of his painted canvases. “The colour and form is completely based on my reaction, over the years, to the form and colour within the sculpture. It was at previous stages more colourful.”

The accumulation of oil medium and pigment is dense enough to mask the original composition into unrecognisability. Where does marble end and the paint begin? Sculpture has a long history of being coloured in western and other cultures: antique statuary and medieval cathedrals were a riot of chromatic shifts and variations. With the exception of terracotta sculpture, colour was superseded by the natural tone of the material until the late twentieth century when colour reemerged as a regular factor in abstract sculpture.

Brown's sources come from the art of the past, but his treatment is as contemporary as can be imagined. As he points out, “Paint is only applied with a brush, making [this work] in essence a painting.” Form is radically reconstructed and unfastened from the legibility of history or symbol. Clarity is supplanted by ambiguity. Identity, therefore, becomes fluid, crossing boundaries between technical terms, as it is increasingly happening in today's society.

Brown underlines this reality. Indeed, the language of all art – including that of abstraction as the subject of this exhibition – is in flux. Yet it is impossible to make without reference. Appropriation and quotation are intrinsic to its being.

*I am extremely grateful to all the artists in the exhibition for discussing their practices with me and for agreeing to be quoted. Our conversations took place by telephone and email with direct reference to their contributions to this exhibition, between 9 April and 14 May 2026.*

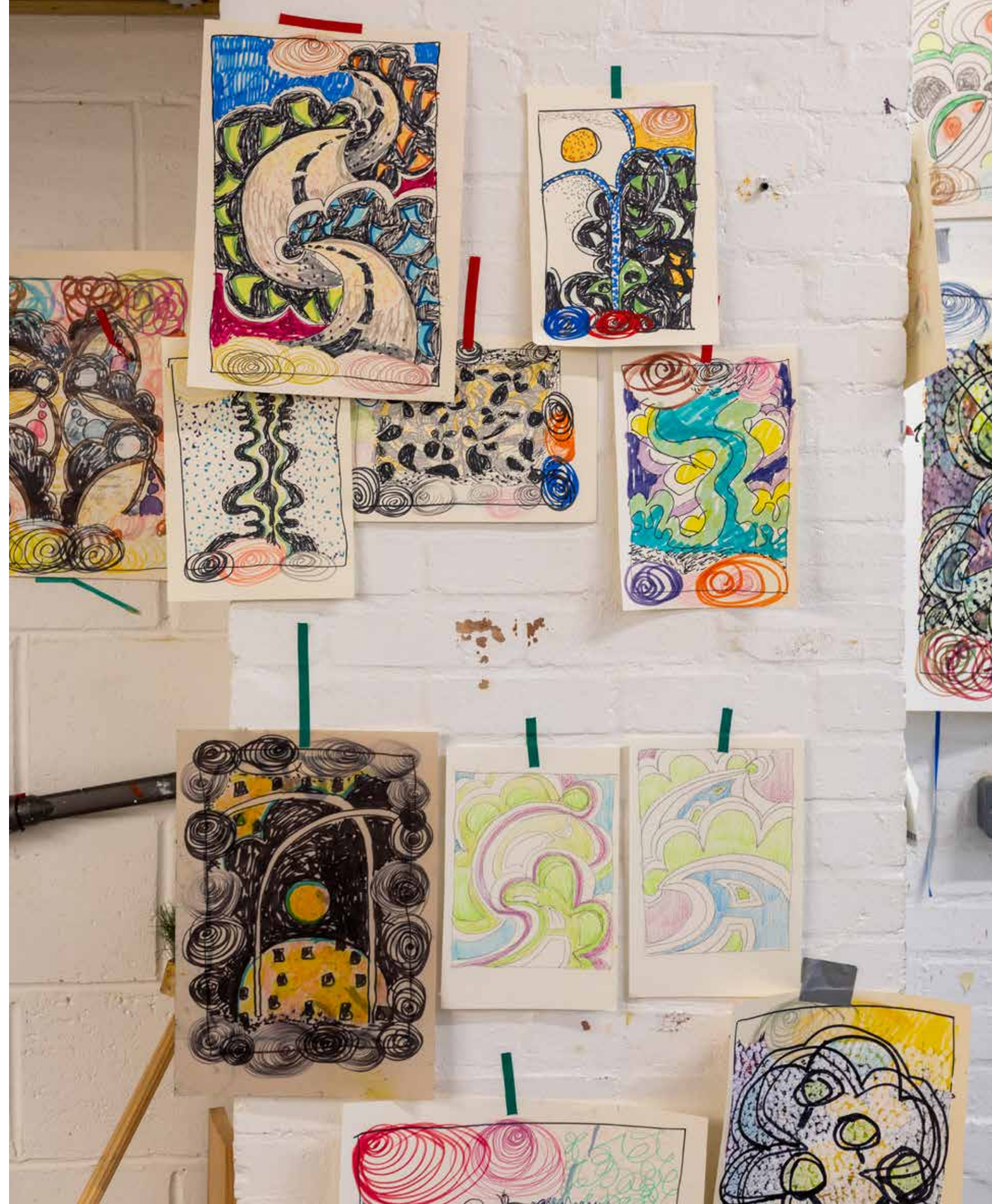
## ON THE THICK AND THIN OF PAINTING

**Martin Holman** is an art historian and writer on art, based in Penzance. His writings appear in museum and gallery publications, and he is a regular contributor to *Art Monthly*, *Sculpture* and the *Burlington Magazine*, among other journals. His special interest is Italian post-war art: he has written extensively on Arte Povera and initiated exhibitions in the UK and Italy on the work of Giorgio Griffa, Paolo Icaro, Pino Pascali, Gilberto Zorio and other leading figures.



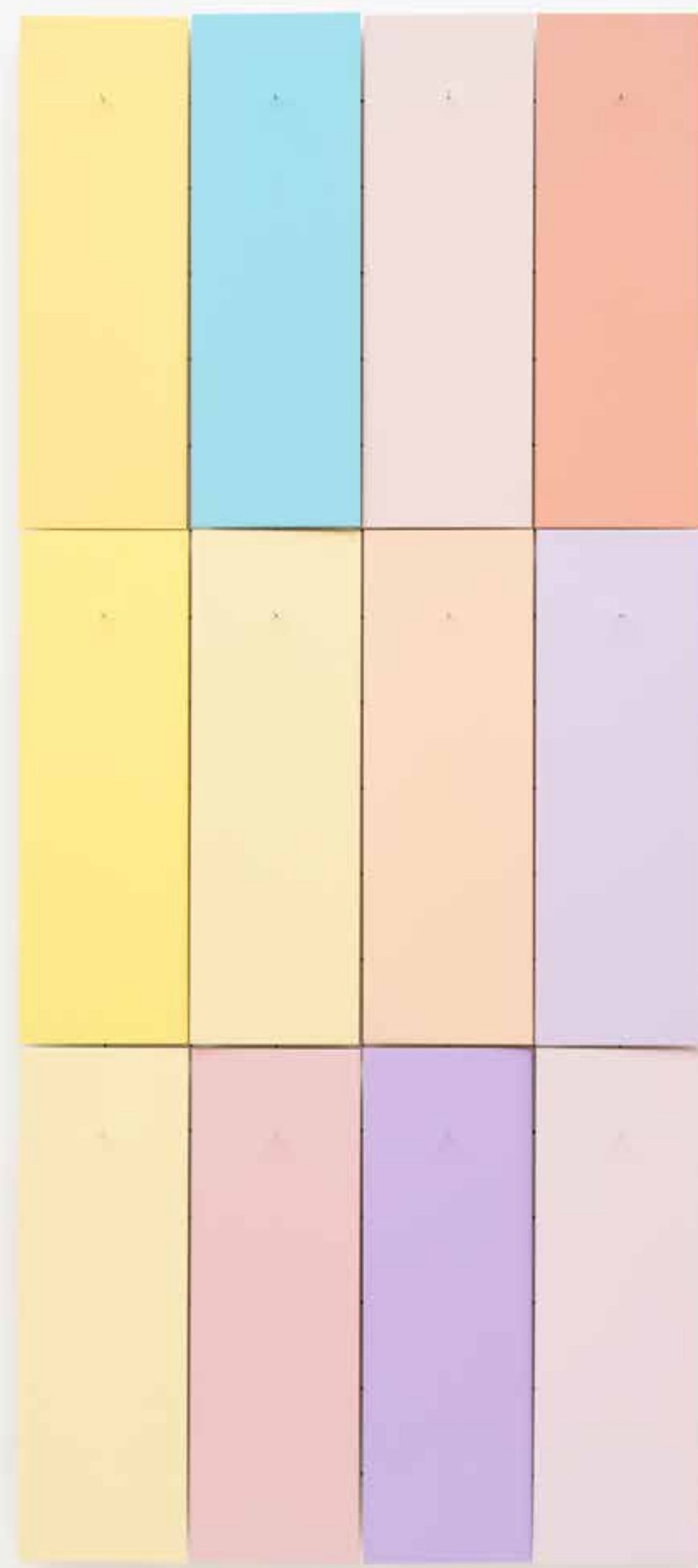
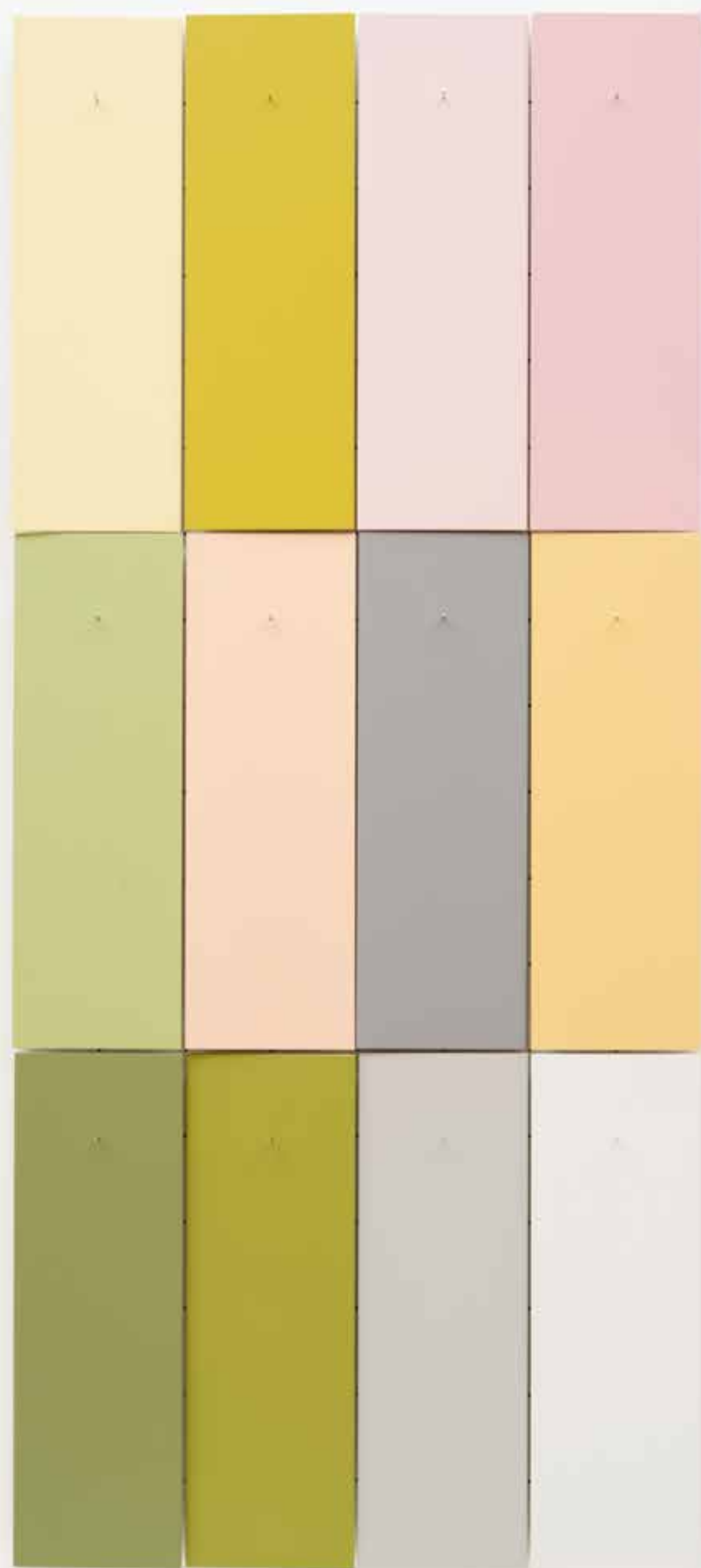
*low memory (rough edge variation)*, 2025, oil on board, 65 x 55 x 7cm

*Flat Space Thinking (Addictive shape formation)*, 2025, oil on board, 135 x 125 x 10cm



*What we see, and see (1)*, 2023, gelatin silver print, unframed:  
30.5 x 20.3cm, framed: 51 x 41 x 2cm  
*(overleaf) Into the green of day (2)*, 2026, paint, aluminium  
components, steel pins, aluminium panel, 90 x 40 x 2cm  
*(overleaf) Spring raiment (2)*, 2026, paint, aluminium  
components, steel pins, aluminium panel, 90 x 40 x 2cm





Hayley Tompkins



*Cuff IX, Snare*, 2025, acrylic on gesso panel and found object, painting:  
38 x 30.5 x 3cm, cuff: 10 x 13 x 6cm. Photo: Patrick Jameson. Courtesy  
of the Artist and The Modern Institute / Toby Webster Ltd., Glasgow



*Stick XXX, XXI, XXIV*, 2025, acrylic on found objects, dimensions variable. Photo: Patrick Jameson. Courtesy of The Artist and The Modern Institute / Toby Webster Ltd., Glasgow





## Glenn Brown



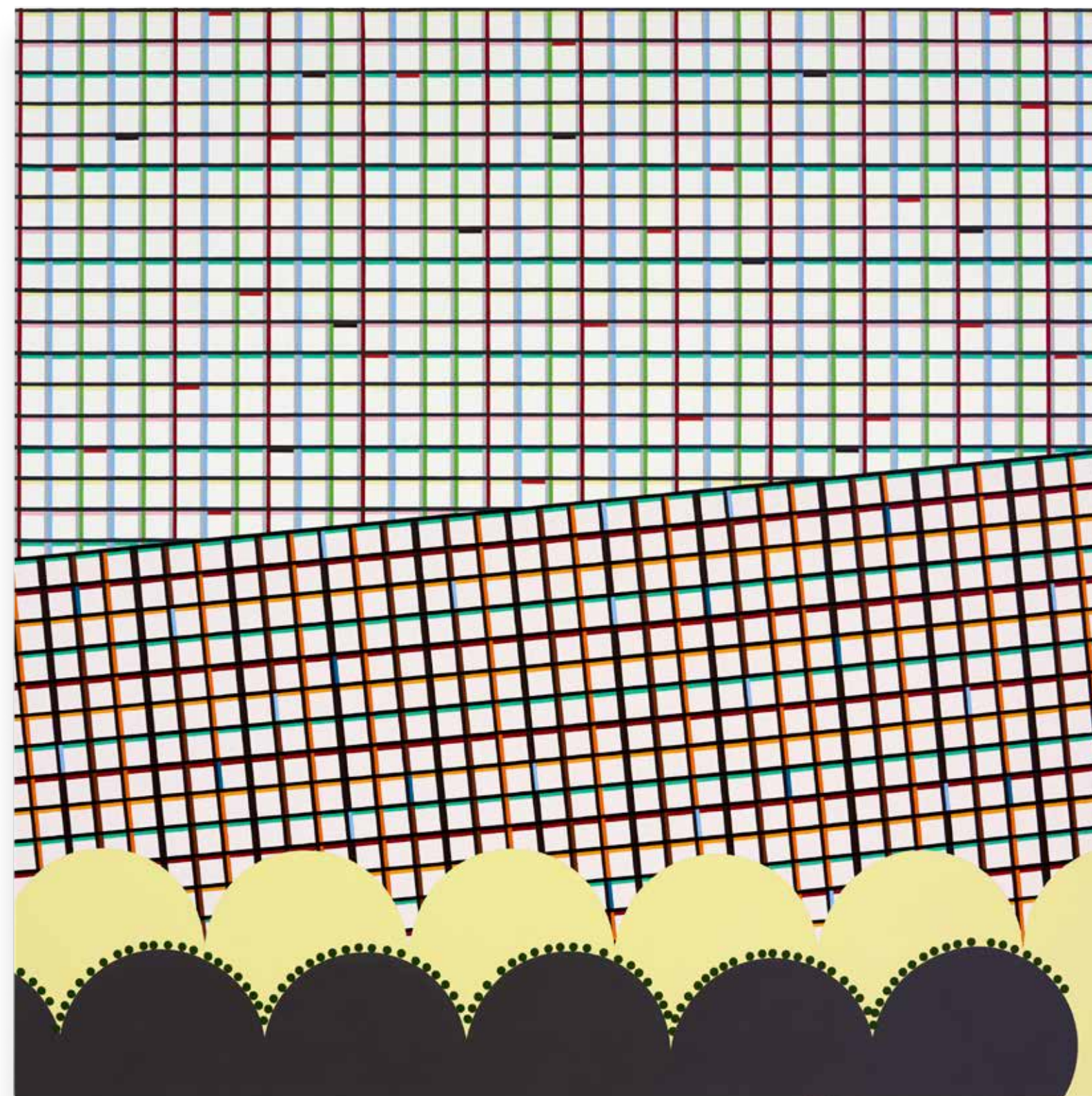
*L'Arlésienne*, 2016, oil paint and acrylic on fibreglass and stainless steel on bronze base, vitrine, 88.5 x 76 x 73cm (sculpture), 198 x 88 x 88cm (vitrine and table). Photo: Mike Bruce

*Swig*, 2025, oil paint and acrylic on marble, 113 x 46 x 40cm. Photo: Joe Humphrys





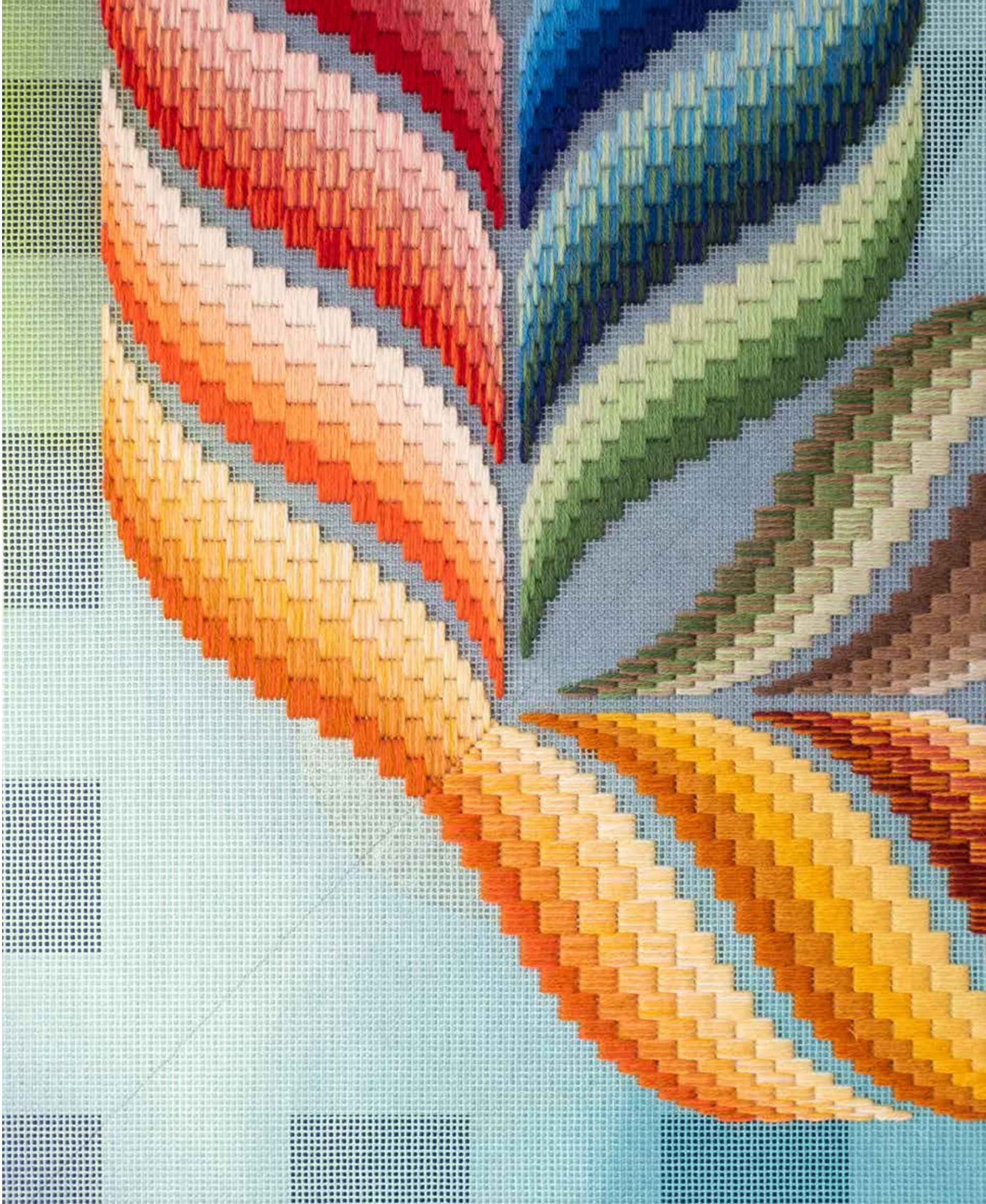






*Wormhole Mosaic [sweat of the sun, tears of the moon], 2022,*  
hand-embroidered wool yarn and acrylic paint on cotton canvas over  
panel with acrylic paint and gilding, 176 x 270cm

Detail of the same











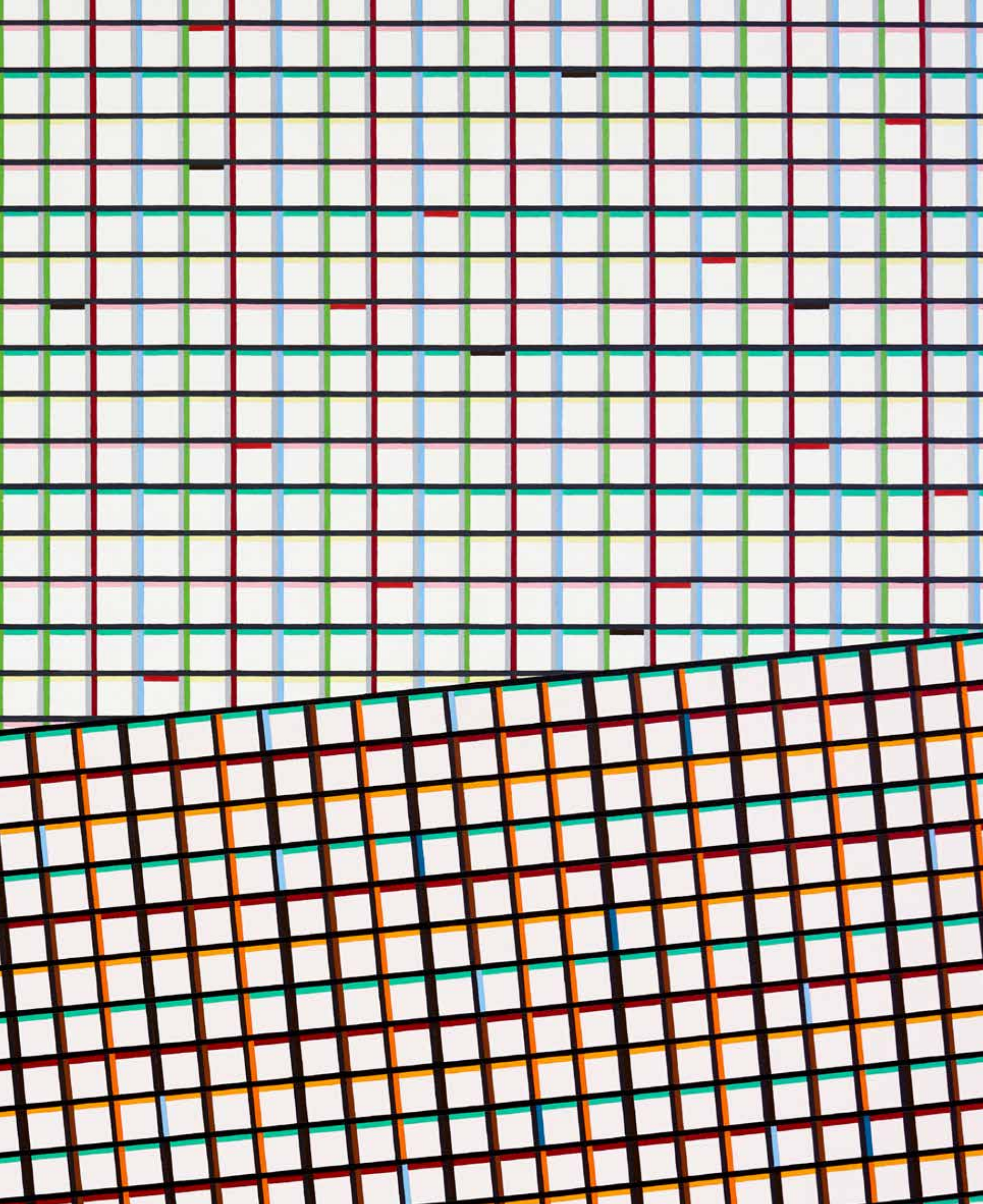
*Drawing (for the world, which seems to lie before us like a land of dreams)*, 2025, Gouache and watercolour on paper, 50.4 x 42cm. Photo: Antony Makinson at Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd. © Fiona Rae. All rights reserved, 2026 DACS.



*Can you make no use of your discontent*, 2023, oil and acrylic on linen, 152.4 x 127cm. Photo: Antony Makinson at Prudence Cuming Associates Ltd. Courtesy Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels. © Fiona Rae. All rights reserved, 2026 DACS.



*Your shadow at evening rising to meet you*, 2025, oil and acrylic on linen, 152.4 x 127cm. Photo: Dan Bradica. Courtesy Miles McEnery Gallery, New York. © Fiona Rae. All rights reserved, 2026 DACS.



# Artist Biographies

**Phillip Allen** was born in London in 1967 where he lives and works today. He studied at Kingston University, London (1990) and the Royal College of Art, London (1992). Allen is known for paintings which incorporate distinctive impasto “brackets” and vividly atmospheric interiors. Allen is the Director and Programme Leader at Turps Education, and teaches on the MA Painting programme at the Royal College of Art.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Deep Waiting*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2026); Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, USA (2024); *New Paintings*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2023); *Coarse Grain*, The Approach, London, UK (2022); *Deepdrippings*, Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, USA (2020); *Deepdrippings*, The Approach, London, UK (2019); *Deepdrippings*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2019) and *Deepdrippings*, Kerlin Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2017).

Selected recent group exhibitions include: *STELLATUNDRA*, Sim Smith Gallery, London, UK (2024); *9am LA*, Thames-side Gallery, London, UK (2023); *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2023); *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, Charlie Smiths, London, UK (2016); *Permeable Edge*, University of Chichester, West Sussex, UK (2016); *From Fly on the Wall to Fly in My Soup*, Gallery Dukan, Paris, France (2015); *Ghetto Anglaise*, Observer Building, Hastings, UK (2015).

Allen’s work is in a number of public collections including Arts Council of England, British Council Collection, Tate Collection, UK Government Art Collection.

**Tom Benson** was born in London in 1963. He studied at Chelsea School of Art (1983); St Martin’s School of Art (1987) and the Royal College of Art (1989). Benson’s practice is painting based but also traverses a variety of materials and media such as drawing, print-making, bookmaking, installation, photography and curation. He often employs an open grid structure, which provides a framework for an evolving arrangement of components, including samples, colours, images and exhibition documentation. In his words “My work lays emphasis on the temporal and political potential of looking and is in a primary sense a meditation upon seeing. I’m interested in the manifold focus of perception that painting offers, and how its material and phenomenal qualities can be used to create a space for contemplative engagement.”

Benson’s solo exhibitions include: *A Wild Practice*, Palfrey, London, UK (2022); *Three Lines*, Guillermina Caicoya Projects, Oviedo, Spain (2017); *Paintings*, Larry Becker Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, USA (2016); *Rime*, Sleeper, Edinburgh, UK (2013); *Subject to Change*, Hidde Van Seggelen, London, UK (2012); *New Work*, Concept Space, Shibukawa, Gunma, Japan (2010); *New Work*, Noborimachi Space of Art, Hiroshima, Japan (2010); *Paintings*, Larry Becker Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, USA (2009); *Paintings*, The Field Institute, Raketenstation, Insel Hombroich, Neuss, Germany (2008); *Registers and Greyscales*, Stiftung für konkrete Kunst (SSK), Reutlingen, Germany (2006); *New Work*, Concept Space, Shibukawa, Gunma, Japan (2005); *A Room with a Window and a Painting*, Hebel\_121, Basel, Switzerland (2004); *Paintings*, Charlotte Jackson Fine Art, Santa Fe, USA (2004).

Selected group shows include: *LINK*, Hidde van Seggelen, Hamburg, Germany (2025); *Six*, Hidde van Seggelen, Hamburg, Germany (2024); *Nine*, Hidde van Seggelen, Hamburg, Germany (2023); *All the Living Friends*, TACA, Palma, Illes Balears, Spain (2022); *Hello Mono-Ha!*, White Conduit Projects, London, UK (2022); *Im Garten der Farben*, PEAC Museum, Freiburg, Germany (2020); *Arbeiten aus System, konkrete kunst*, Kunstmuseum Reutlingen / konkret, Reutlingen, Germany (2019); *Solstice / Reflections in Winter Light*, Becker Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, USA (2016); *Feel the Discourse*, Guest Projects, London, UK (2015); *Oevres. On Precision, Repetition and Obsession*, Slewe Gallery, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2015); *Konzept*, Kunstraum Alexander Bürkle, Freiburg, Germany (2014); *Schema-Sukima*, Laure Genillard, London, UK (2014); The Hole, London, UK (2011); *Forman Collection*, Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, NY, USA; *Suki-Mono-Tachi*, (*Ways since Rin-pa*), Nagoya, Japan (2006).

Benson has undertaken artist residencies at Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Carraig-na-gcat, West Cork, Ireland (2025); Guest Studio, Ateliers Höherweg e. V., Düsseldorf, Germany (2014); The Field Institute, Raketenstation, Insel Hombroich, Neuss, Germany (2008). He has curated numerous exhibitions including *Mind Rhymes*, Hidde van Seggelen, London, UK (2013); *Forms of Address*, Laure Genillard, London, UK (2019); *A Painting*, Gallery N von Bartha, London, UK (2003) and Fruchthalle, Kaiserslautern, Germany (2004). He was a judge for the 2014 John Moores Prize for Painting.

Benson's work is included in the British Council Collection; The Guardian Newspaper, London, UK; Robert Worcester, MORI, London UK; Ben Janssens, London, UK; Meijer Collection, Basel, Switzerland; Albright-Knox Museum, Buffalo, NY, USA; Manfred Wandel Collection, Kunstmuseum Reutlingen | konkret, Reutlingen, Germany.

**Glenn Brown** was born in Hexham in 1966 and lives and works in London and Suffolk. He studied at Norwich School of Art (1985) Bath College of Higher Education (1988) and for his MA at Goldsmiths College (1992). He is known for the use of art historical references in his paintings. Starting with reproductions from other artist's works, Brown transforms the appropriated image by changing its colour, position and size. Brown also places sculpture as a central point of his practice. They are created by accumulating thick layers of oil paint over structures or found bronze casts. His sculptures, deliberately emphasizing the three-dimensional quality of oil brushstrokes, stand in stark contrast to his flat paintings.

Brown's recent solo exhibitions include: *Brown in Bath: Arrows of Desire*, Holburne Museum, Bath, UK (2026); *Brown in Bath: Grottoesque*, No 1 Royal Crescent, Bath, UK (2026); *Hoi Polloi*, The Brown Collection, Marylebone, London (2026); *The Anatomy of Trees*, Gainsborough House, Suffolk, UK (2025); *The Sight of Something: Glenn Brown and Matthew Weir*, Freud Museum, London, UK (2025); *In the Altogether*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, France (2024); Mark's Club, London, UK (2023); *The Leisure Centre*, The Brown Collection, London, UK (2023); *The Real Thing Part 2 (Retrospective)*, Landesmuseum, Hanover, Germany (2023); *The Real Thing Part 1 (Retrospective)*, Sprengel Museum, Hanover, Germany (2023); The Brown Collection, London, UK (2023); *We'll Keep On Dancing Till We Pay The Rent*, Gagosian, New York, USA (2022); *And Thus We Existed*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, Germany (2020); Musée National Eugène Delacroix, Paris, France (2019).

Recent group exhibitions: *The Life In A Line!*, Heath Robinson Museum, London, UK (2026); *Inauguration*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Isola di San Giacomo, Venice, Italy (2026); *On Paper 2026*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin Germany (2026); *The Omnipotence of Dreams*, Gagosian, Gstaad, Switzerland (2026); *News From The Near Future*, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (2026); *New Acquisitions*, Burnaby Art Gallery, Canada (2025); *Summer Salon Hang*, Lyndsey Ingram, London, UK (2025); *Alien Shores*, White Cube, London, UK (2025); *Summer Hang*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, France (2025); Copyists, Louvre/Pompidou, Mertz, France (2026); *Potential Colour*, Galerie Max Hetzler, London, UK (2025); *Insights into the Inside: Nicaea*, Schloss Bruck, Museum der Stadt, Lienz, Austria (2025); *Stories of Your Lives*, Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, Germany (2025); *On Paper*, Galerie Max Hetzler, London, UK (2025) *Experimenteerdrift*, Rembrandt House, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2024).

Brown's work is held in numerous collections worldwide including Art Institute of Chicago; Arts Council of England; British Museum; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tate Collection; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. In 2022 Brown established The Brown Collection in London, an art museum showcasing his artwork alongside his choice of works by contemporary and historical artists. He received a CBE for his service to the arts in 2019.

**Cecilia Charlton** was born in Corning, New York, USA in 1985. She lives and works in Glasgow where she is undertaking a practice-based SGSAH-AHRC funded PhD at Glasgow School of Art. She previously studied painting at Hunter College, New York (2015) and the Royal College of Art, London (2018). Charlton uses historically grounded textile techniques to pursue her interests in geometry, colour and the role of the subconscious and hand made.

Charlton's recent solo exhibitions include *Reinkarnacija*, Židiny's Gallery, Vilnius, Lithuania (2025); *Memory Garden*, Garden Museum, London, UK (2023); *Syzygy*, Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, UK (2023); *Mammoth Loop*, SPACE, Ilford, UK (2021) and *Aurora*, Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, UK (2020).

Group exhibitions include: *A Stitch in Time*, Paul Smith Space, London, UK (2026); *Every Infinitesimal Thought*, Sarah Bouchard Gallery, Woolwich ME, USA (2025); *Pattern Cutters*, Ragged School Museum, London, UK (2025); *Colours Uncovered*, Harewood House, Leeds, UK (2024); *Positions: Part Two*, Alma Pearl Gallery, London, UK (2023); *Summer Exhibition*, Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, UK (2023); *Altered Sites: On Psychedelic Architecture*, West Dean College of Arts and Conservation, UK (2023); *Jerwood Art Fund Makers Open*, Touring Exhibition, UK; *when you make sense I feel*, Fitzrovia Gallery, London, UK (2020); *Parade*, Broadway Gallery, Letchworth Garden City, UK (2019); *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy, London, UK (2019); *Tender Touches*, AMP Gallery, London, UK (2019); *Grid: Preset*, Blyth Gallery, London, UK (2019); *FAKERS*, Thames-side Gallery, London, UK (2018) *Lifeline as Medium*, 532 Gallery, New York, USA (2018); *Rogue Objects*, University College of London, London, UK (2018).

Charlton was shortlisted for the Brookfield Properties Craft Award (2022) and the Fulbright UK Scholarship (2015) She has received awards from Arts Council England (2024), Lithuanian Cultural Council (2025), the Jerwood Foundation (2021), and the Ellen Battel Stockel Fellowship as part of the Yale University Norfolk Residency (2014). Her work is held in the public collections of Bowdoin College, the National Museum of Lithuania, Guy's & St Thomas' Foundation, London School of Economics, and the NHS/Bart's Trust.

**Martina Geccelli** was born in Germany and brought up in Berlin. Having previously been resident in New York Geccelli now lives and works between London and Saint Chinian in France. She studied architecture at the University of the Arts, Berlin, and sculpture at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Her sculptures, drawings and photographs explore the potential of nonobjective consciousness, with her work, which employs the interplay of line, shapes and colour, emphasising a return to a haptic engagement with material of sculpture and painting.

Recent solo and duo shows include: *Martina Geccelli and Clem Crosby*, Esther Verhaege Art Concepts, Brussels, Belgium (2025); *Martina Geccelli and Clem Crosby*, RaumX, London, UK (2024); *Martina Geccelli and Britta Bogers*, Esther Verhaege Art Concepts, Brussels, Belgium (2020); *Shift: Martina Geccelli and Shawn Stipling*, RaumX, London, UK (2018); *In-Between*, Boecker Contemporary, Heidelberg, Germany (2016).

Recent group exhibitions include: *Hardpainting*, Phoenix Art Space, Brighton, UK (2024); *Wärterhäuschen*, Museumsinsel Hombroich, Neuss, Germany (2022); *Art. My Talisman*, Esther Verhaege Art Concepts, Brussels, Belgium (2021); *Green Title*, artspace RUIMTE P60, Assen, The Netherlands (2020); *IN and OUT*, RaumX, London, UK (2016); *Shifting Realities*, Halle Zhen, Cap Cologne, Cologne, Germany (2010); *Sorry we're open*, London Metropolitan University and Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2010); *Projektion – Illusion*, Kunstraum Alexander Buerkle, Freiburg, Germany (2010); *Tell it like it is*, Galerie Jones, Cologne, Germany (2009); *Macht der Sprache*. Goethe Institut, Berlin, Germany (2006); *Womankind*, Hoopers Gallery, London, UK (2006); Gallery Stefan Rasche, Berlin, Germany (2000); *Still Life*, Goethe Institut, London, UK (2000) *Still Life*, Gallery Rasche, Münster, Germany (2000).

Artist residencies include World Trade Center, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (2000); The Museum of Loss and Renewal (TMoLaR) Collemacchia, Italy (2018); Raketenstation, Insel Hombroich, Neuss, Germany (2022, 2012).

In 2013 Geccelli founded the independent artist space RaumX in London.

**Alexis Harding** was born in London in 1973 and lives and works in the city. He studied at Goldsmiths College (1995). Harding’s paintings are made through long durational periods combined with sudden split-second decisions and manipulations of the painting. He uses oil paint and household gloss paint, two different incompatible histories of colour to make paintings. The tension between the seeming spontaneity of Harding’s works and the control exercised by the artist in their manipulation creates a powerful dialectic that makes “the dumb materiality of his medium into something active, fractious, misbehaved, laughing, driven with dissent and raucous arguments, rather than passively subservient to the wishes of its maker” (J. J. Charlesworth).

Recent solo and duo exhibitions include: *Gutter Habit*, Alexis Harding/Emma Roche, Highlanes Gallery, Drogheda, Ireland (2025); *20 YEARS / 20 SECONDS*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2025); *Wiper Quad*, Hunted Projects, Edinburgh, UK (2025); *20 YEARS / 20 SECONDS*, Palazzo Regione Lombardia, Milan, Italy (2024); *Skin Horizon*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2021); *Skin Deep*, Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Lissone, Italy (2020); *ALEXIS HARDING: 60 paintings Survey Exhibition*, Watson Farley & Williams, London, UK (2019); *Passing Through: small selected works 2008–2018*, Peninsular project space, Singapore, (2018); *The Extended Field: Mark Francis/Alexis Harding*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2017); *Stirrings Still*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2016); *Robert Combas and Alexis Harding*, H2M-Espace d’art contemporain, Bourg-en-Bresse, France (2015).

His work has recently been included in group exhibitions such as *Mirror City*, JGM Gallery, London, UK (2026); *Paint Thing*, Cornerstone Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2026); *Wave, Colour, Turbulence*, Tension Gallery, London, UK (2024); *What Presence*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2024); *Soft Air*, Filet, London, UK (2022); *Cuts*, Matthiesen Gallery, London, UK (2020); *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy, London, UK (2020); *Skin Deep – Alexis Harding, Sean Shanahan, Daniel Sturgis*, Antonella Cattani Contemporary Art, Bolzano, Italy (2019); *Substantifs*, Arthouse1 Gallery, London, UK (2019); *Stairway to Heaven*, Watson Farley & Williams, London, UK (2019).

Harding’s work is held in numerous public collections, including Arts Council of England; Bank of Spain; Caldic Collection, Rotterdam; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; National Museums Liverpool. He was the winner of the John Moores Prize for painting in 2004 and is the MA Fine Art course leader at the University of East London.

**Fiona Rae** was born in Hong Kong in 1963, living in Hong Kong, Australia and Indonesia, before coming to the UK in 1971. After completing a BA Hons in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College (1987), her paintings were included in 1988’s *Freeze* exhibition in London’s Docklands which launched the Young British Artists (YBAs). Constantly reinvigorating her practice through self-imposed strategic challenges, Rae’s paintings are known for their inventive uses of colour, line, imagery and gesture, and an iconoclastic approach to subject matter and formal concerns. Fiona Rae’s work incarnates an abstract pop universe, filled with references to modern and contemporary painting, pop culture and digital technology.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Vista*, Es Baluard Museu d’Art Contemporani de Palma, Mallorca, Spain (2026); *Ensemble*, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, France (2025); Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, USA (2024); *Messages*, Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris, France (2024); Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Brussels, Belgium (2023); Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, USA (2022); *Row Paintings*, Buchmann Galerie, Berlin, Germany (2022); *Many-Colour’d Messenger / Messagère aux diverses couleurs*, Centre d’art La Malmaison, Cannes, France (2021–2022).

Recent group exhibitions: *Special Relationships*, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, USA (2025); *All our Todays. Contemporary Art from the Museum of Art*, Muzuel de Artă Recentă, Bucharest, Romania; *Nachleben: La pintura com a art conceptual*, Es Baluard Museu d’Art Contemporani de Palma, Mallorca, Spain (2025); *Journeys to the East: Revelations and Reverberations*, Guangdong Museum of Art, Guangzhou, China (2024); *Liquid Life*, Musée d’art contemporain de la Haute-Vienne – Château de Rochechouart, Rochechouart, France (2024); *A Living Collection*, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK (2024); *50 Paintings*, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, USA (2023); *Object, Body, and Space*, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, Centro Cultural de Belém Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal (2023); *Start Display*, Tate Modern, London, UK (2023).

Her work is held in numerous public collections worldwide, including Albertina Museum, Vienna; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, The Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.; Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Mudam) Luxembourg; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Tate Collection. Rae was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 1991 and was elected a Royal Academician in 2002.

**Daniel Sturgis** was born in London in 1966 where he still lives and works. He studied at London College of Printing (1986), Camberwell College of Arts (1989) and for his MA at Goldsmiths College (1994). Sturgis’s painterly language infuses formalism’s rigorous traditions of visual intellect and craftsmanship with contemporary pop references and casual aesthetics. His work proposes new possibilities for the continued relevance and vitality of abstract painting and his off-beat geometric arrangements reinvest the optimistic and visionary qualities of modernism with a provocative and non-hierarchical aesthetic.

Recent solo and duo exhibitions include: *The Same Air*, Crux, Athens, Greece (2023); *Shila Khatami and Daniel Sturgis*, RaumX, London, UK (2022); *Daniel Sturgis and Dan Walsh: The Science of Painting*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2021); *We Work Together*, PS, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2020); *The Way It Is*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2018); *Daniel Sturgis*, Sleeper, Edinburgh, UK (2018); *And then Again*, noshowspace, London, UK (2014).

His work has recently been included in group exhibitions such as: *La mort d’un poète se fait moins de bruit qu’une feuille de tilleul qui tombe*, Topographie de l’art, Paris, France (2026); *Units of Attention*, Crux, Athens, Greece (2025); *Sublime Space*, Heath Robinson Museum, London, UK (2025); *Pattern Cutters*, Ragged School Museum, London, UK (2025); *Wave, Colour, Turbulence*, Tension Gallery, London, UK (2024); *PS 1999–2024*, PS, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2024); *Hard Paper*, Phoenix Art Space, Brighton, UK (2024); *What Presence*, Luca Tommasi, Milan, Italy (2024); *Transfer: Korean and British Abstract Painting and the Digital Document*, Korean Cultural Centre, London, UK (2023); *Escaping Demarcation*, Changwon Seongsan Art Centre, Changwon Biennale, Korea (2022); *True Believers: The Apartment in Crux, Part II*, Crux, Athens, Greece (2022); *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy, London, UK (2020); *The Collectors Room*, JGM Gallery, London, UK (2020); *Hardpainting*, Phoenix Art Space, Brighton, UK (2020); *Skin Deep – Alexis Harding, Sean Shanahan, Daniel Sturgis*, Antonella Cattani Contemporary Art Bolzano, Italy (2019).

Sturgis has undertaken artists in residencies at the Stiftung Arp Ev, Berlin, Germany (2024); Bauhaus Dessau, Germany (2019); Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany CT, USA (2016); Chinati Foundation, Marfa, TX, USA (2007); Wordsworth Trust, UK (2005); British School at Rome, Italy (1999).

His work is held in numerous collections, including British Land; the UK Government Art Collection; Mercedes Benz Art Collection; Paisley Museum and Art Gallery; Progressive Insurance, USA; Saatchi Collection; University of Warwick Art Collection. In 2011 he co-curated the major international exhibition *The Indiscipline of Painting* Tate St Ives and Warwick Art Centre (2011/12). He has curated solo exhibitions on the work of Jeremy Moon (2000), Daniel Buren (2005), John Armleder (2011), David Troostwyk (2019) and Carmengloria Morales (2024). His essay *Alan Uglow: From Britain to America* was published by Tate Papers (2020) and he regularly writes on abstract painting for Burlington Contemporary and Texte zur Kunst. He is professor of painting at the University of the Arts London, and chair of the faculty of fine art at the British School at Rome.

**Hayley Tompkins** was born in 1971 in Leighton Buzzard, and lives and works in Glasgow. She studied painting at Glasgow School of Art (1994) and completed an MA in Fine Art at the same institution (1998). She employs photography, painting and film to re-examine the everyday, asking us to look and look again. In her painted works she often rhythmically details and patterns various objects, from mallets and twigs to shirts, sunglasses and chairs – refreshing and energising the mundane.

Tompkins’s solo exhibitions include: *surroundings*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2025); *Tell Gonzo How*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles, USA (2023); *Far*, Fruitmarket, Edinburgh, UK (2022); *After a Long Sleep, It Woke Up*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2020); *Bag of rainbow*, Recent Activity, Birmingham, UK (2020); *Stick crystals to paintings*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2018); *Myth Cart*, Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh, UK (2016); *Lulu*, Mexico City, Mexico (2016); *Electric Magnetic Installation*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2015); The Common Guild, Glasgow, UK (2014); *Space Kitchen*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA (2013); *Currents*, Studio Voltaire, London, UK (2011); *A Piece of Eight*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2011); *Autobuilding*, Inverleith House, Edinburgh, UK (2009); *Re*, The Drawing Room, London, UK (2008); and *Transfer* (with Sue Tompkins) Spike Island, Bristol, UK (2007). Tompkins represented Scotland at the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.

Selected group shows include: *L is for Landscape*, Division of Labour, London, UK (2026); *Units of Attention*, Crux, Athens, Greece (2025); *Echoes of Rituals*, Jan Kaps,

Cologne, Germany (2025); *Bright colours falsely seen*, Robert Heald Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand (2024); *Toil*, Croy Nielsen, Vienna, Austria (2024); *Papertrail*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles, USA (2023); *Sabrina*, Sim Smith, London, UK (2022); Chris Sharp Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (2022); Hollybush Gardens, London, UK (2021); *Particularities*, X Museum, Beijing, China (2021); *Breaking the Mould: Sculpture by Women since 1945*, Arts Council Collection Touring Exhibition, UK (2021); *I Know Where I'm Going – Who Can I Be Now*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow, UK (2021); *Chips and Egg*, The Sunday Painter, London, UK (2019); *Katinka Bock, Esther Kläs, Helen Mirra, Hayley Tompkins*, Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London, UK (2019); *Drawing Biennial 2019*, Drawing Room, London, UK (2019); *Jahresgaben 2018*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2018); *Portrait (for a Screenplay) of Beth Harmon*, Tenderpixel, London, UK (2017), *British Art Show 8*, Touring Exhibition, UK (2015–2016); *The Persistence of Objects*, Lismore Castle Arts, Waterford, Ireland (2015); *Painting in Time*, The Tetley, Leeds, UK (2015), *Every Day*, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, UK (2013); *The Imminence of Poetics*, Sao Paulo Biennale, Sao Paulo, Brazil (2012) and *Watercolour*, Tate Britain, London, UK (2011).

Tompkins's work is held in notable collections such as: Arts Council of England; British Council Collection; Fondazione Morra; Mercedes Benz Art Collection; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Collection; Touchstones, Rochdale; The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.



