

The approach

Peter Davies
AFTERSHOCK

30 October – 20 December 2019

Opening preview: Wednesday 30th October, 6-9pm

I am interested in making abstract paintings. My new paintings are informed by the small paper collages I made for PREMONITION, The Annexe, London (2018). Although different in appearance the state of mind or point of view I affect when making them feels similar. The experience is liberating and empowering. They are gestural and suggestive of emotion but don't express something specific. While I want them to be revealing, criticality remains a central concern in so much as how they differ from Abstract Expressionism. With Ab-Ex there was a belief in the 'originality' of the gesture, whereas I think that my marks exist as post-conceptual ideas. Nonetheless they are heart-felt and free from irony. Though appreciating the enduring legacy of Abstract Expressionism I have always been repelled by the "chest-beating" machismo of certain artists in its canon; yet entranced by the delicacy, sensitivity and tenderness in the work of others. I want these paintings of mine to hold the latter qualities, and reject the former. By extension, these paintings are non-heroic. Rather than being flamboyant and puffed up with bravura, they are indebted to the idea of modesty, with aesthetics being akin to the results of damage.

Teaching, and learning from students has been the thing that has most enabled me to engage with this way of working. The perceived out-dated redundancy of gestural abstract painting appeals to me. It has an unapologetic defiance that allows a way to reflect a contemporary sense of fragmentation that echoes the search I think a lot of younger artists have for modes of self-expression in a saturated corporate world. I have always been informed by the full spectrum of ways of making art, not just painting, but I want these abstract paintings to have personality and character like a figurative painting. They feel to me not so distant from works of mine made as long as twenty plus years ago: my earliest text and abstract paintings owed an equivalent debt to Ab-Ex in their all-over structure and with the underlying expressive anger in the sentiment of the text paintings. Since then the work has gone through various manoeuvres, considering formal and conceptual qualities of line, scale, space, perspective, systems, repetition, labour, surface, humour, content, emptiness, subtlety and intensity. The exhibition INVOCATION, The Approach, London (2012) had a more sombre and meditative ambience than in previous shows, which lead to the gradual emergence of emotion in my work.

For me, a requirement of these new paintings is that they display a greater sense of honesty similar to the directness in the collages. This has required an economy and control in the use of materials. Instinct and intuition in tandem with restraint means I can immerse myself in making these paintings in a way that results in something more truthful.

– Peter Davies, October 2019

Peter Davies (b. 1970, Edinburgh, UK) lives and works in London. Selected exhibitions include *PREMONITION*, The Approach, London, UK (2018), *All Day Breakfast*, Reading International at Munches, Reading, UK, *Form & Volume*, CFHILL, Stockholm, Sweden (2017), *rites*, The Approach, London, UK (2015), *The Decorator and The Thief (...)*, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Sunderland, UK (2015); *FUNCTION/RITUAL*, Vladimir Restoin Roitfeld, New York, USA (2014); *INVOCATION*, The Approach, London, UK (2012); *The Indiscipline of Painting International Abstraction from the 1960s to Now*, Tate St. Ives, UK; then travelled to Mead Gallery, University of Warwick, UK (2011-12); *The Epoch of Perpetual Happiness*, The Approach, London, UK (2010); *The Making Of Art*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany (2009); *Previous John Moores Prize Winners*, The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2008).

For further information or images please contact Jędrzej Nyka at jedrzej@theapproach.co.uk

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Universe, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
254 x 213.4 cm | 100 x 84 in.

Devil, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
213.5 x 167.5 cm | 84 x 65 7/8 in.

Friend, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
213.5 x 167.5 cm | 84 x 65 7/8 in.

Backhander, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
213.4 x 167.5 cm | 84 x 65 7/8 in.

Evil Eye, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
228.6 x 152.4 cm | 90 x 60 in.

In the office:

AFTERSHOCK
Painted paper collages
29.7 x 21 cm
11 5/8 x 8 1/4 in. each

Proxy, 2019
Acrylic and paper on canvas
213.5 x 167.5 cm | 84 x 65 7/8 in.

Crown, 2019
Acrylic and paper on canvas
213.5 x 167.5 cm | 84 x 65 7/8 in.