

Victoria Morton *Pedal Point*

Sadie Coles HQ, 1 Davies Street
February 2021

Victoria Morton's solo exhibition, *Pedal Point*, comprises a new body of work on canvas in which she distils her multi-layered and analytic approach to painting. Referencing the musical notion of the 'pedal point' – a sustained note, during which the harmony and dissonance above it evolve – these recent compositions synthesise rational structure with intuitive expression.

Across large and small-scale formats, the canvasses extend the conscious explorations central to Morton's physical, performative process, counterbalanced with psychological expression. Through this approach, pictorial planes are mapped and contoured through aggregates of freely formed pools of colour, interwoven with linear structures and accumulations of near-pointillist brushstrokes. Shifting between the fluid and the concrete, these abstracted landscapes teem with kinetic tension and desire, simultaneously conjuring, and eluding, literal interpretation.



In places Morton engages a loosely defined schemata, examining notions of organic form through the material process of painting itself. Developing techniques that evolved in connection with a recent commission by The Stem Cell Institute in Cambridge, the artist allows pools of oil paint to naturally amass, swell and evaporate across the canvas surface, creating a suspended image parallel to that of a developing photograph. The emergent cellular formations evolve as cosmic landscapes, in which space dilates, shifts, recedes and contracts. Elsewhere improvised 'automatic' markings, inspired by musical notations, are reconfigured by networks of diagrammatic or clustered brushstrokes, interpolating the abstract scenery with a spatial rationale of dance-like movement.

Morton consciously references a painting lineage that extends from American action painting, biomorphic abstraction, Russian Constructivism and the geometric De Stijl aesthetic of Mondrian. Morton's practice extends to textiles, music and sound, and sculptural construction. Last year she completed an environmental installation for the Royal College of Music in London. She therefore specifically identifies with artists for whom historically painting was at the centre of a multidisciplinary practice: Natalia Goncharova, Annie Albers, Paule Vézelay and Popova among them.

Especially striking in this new group of paintings, Morton invites sensory interpretation through colour as potent stimulus. Luminous overlapping hues – jewel-like oranges, violets, pinks, acid greens, and cool blues – evoke the chromatic experimentations of Sonia Delaunay, in which the relationship of colour and form alone channel multiple experiential realities.

Throughout, Morton foregrounds painting as both medium and subject, exploring the potentials for expression through constructed composition and reference points from art history. Central to this process is the discourse between spatial articulation of the canvas and its relation to the body, and subsequently the evocation of sensory narrative. In the large-scale paintings, Morton has perceived the canvas as an expansive field to encompass the human body: both her own, through the act of painting, and the viewer's, through the act of looking. She has stated that both the 'movement of the eyes and physical movement are essential', perceiving the experience of the paintings a kind of 'mind wandering'.

HOMEWORK #7: *Pedal Point* Notes

Three paintings are also the subject of a HOMEWORK project *Pedal Point* Notes. Focussing on the large-scale canvasses *La Danse*, *Pedal Point*, and *Serpents*, the online platform shows videos with music composed by Victoria at her home studio. The project is the seventh iteration HOMEWORK, the gallery's online platform presenting works and creative explorations direct from artist studios. Visit HOMEWORK #7: *Pedal Point* Notes.

Victoria Morton (b. 1971, Glasgow) studied at Glasgow School of Art. She has exhibited internationally. Solo exhibitions include *Treat Fever with Fever*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2019); *My Mother Was A Reeler*, Etro, London (2016); *Spoken Yeahs From A Distance*, Sadie Coles HQ, London (2016); *Mouth Wave*, Rat Hole Gallery, Tokyo (2014); *Tapestry (Radio On)*, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2012); Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2010); *Sun By Ear (with Katy Dove)*, Tramway, Glasgow (2007); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany, 2002; and Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2001). Recent group exhibitions include *Fieldwork*, 42 Carlton Place, Glasgow (2020); *Foundation Painting Show*, British Heart Foundation, Glasgow International, Glasgow (2018); *Von Pablo Picasso bis Robert Rauschenberg Schenkung Céline, Heiner und Aeneas Bastian Hommage à Ingrid Mössinger*, Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz, Berlin (2017); *Out of the Frame: Scottish Abstraction*, The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum, Dundee (2016); *Devils in the Making*, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2015); *Generation: 25 Years of Contemporary Art in Scotland*, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (2014); and *That Petrol Emotion*, Metropolitan Art Society, Beirut (2014). Victoria Morton lives and works in Glasgow.

For further information please contact the gallery at +44 (0)20 7493 8611 or press@sadiecoles.com

www.sadiecoles.com

62 Kingly Street London W1B 5QN
1 Davies Street London W1K 3DB
T +44 [0] 20 7493 8611

Reg in England no 3211376
Vat no 690 6671 06