

**Rachel Eulena Williams**  
**Silk Cotton Snow**  
**The Modern Institute, Osborne Street**  
**19<sup>th</sup> March 2021 – 24<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

The Modern Institute is pleased to present Rachel Eulena Williams in the Osborne Street space for her debut exhibition in the UK. Williams has been gaining increasing recognition for a practice that pushes the formal boundaries of painting and radical material exploration, embodying a sculptural form beyond its canvas dimensions. This new collection of works demonstrates Williams's continuous evolution in her visual language and critique of colour and material, with each visceral piece breathing a renewed vitality into the gallery space.

Titled in relation to the recent snowstorms in the US, the works were conceived in the winter, apparent in the cool hues of blue and lilac that are interrupted by warm fluorescent oranges. Williams describes snow as a metaphor for this series: a middle ground of water, neither aqueous nor frozen yet possessing a transformational, near spiritual quality. This is clear by the presence of her tondo paintings that inevitably call to mind religious Renaissance paintings, in addition to their physical essence that echo the bodily gestures behind Ed Clark's circular works, and the Gutai group, particularly the innovative concepts surrounding play and use of everyday objects championed by Atsuko Tanaka.

Williams paints with materials: birthed from layers of fragmented canvas, paper folder dividers and staples; ropes of varying size, textures and purposes; and even deconstructed components of a hammock, all either painted over or left surrounded by the swathe of saturated colours evocative of influential Black abstractionists such as Alma Thomas and Al Loving. Pieces are moved and reused, each layer revealing an entirely different and unexpected image beneath as shapes and colours clash, complement, circle, and conjoin with a similar intensity excelled by Howardena Pindell. This complex balancing of light and heavy, and incorporation of offcuts of past works leads memory and history to form organically: the assemblages continuously encourage the viewer to search for more information, and amidst this we find our eyes meeting with that of a ghostly, screen printed face, just distinguishable by hair, eyes and nose. This alluded portrait further accentuates the involvement of the body - the artist's during its production, the tangible result, and the viewer's in relation to the work - asserting the transformational element that permeates Williams's paintings. Ropes trace elusive shapes akin to Joan Miró and edge the paintings, its ornamental frame allowing the works to spill beyond its formal confines and into the whitespace, leading the paintings and artist to occupy space both literally and metaphorically.

**Rachel Eulena Williams** (b. 1991, Miami, Florida) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Williams has exhibited internationally at *Hey Mars: Rachel Eulena Williams and Scott Treleaven*, Cooper Cole, Toronto (2020); *Tracing Memory: Rachel Eulena Williams*, Canada Gallery (2020); Loyal Gallery, Stockholm (2019); Ceysson & Bénétière, Sainte Etienne (2018); Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2018); Derek Eller Gallery, New York (2018); Cooper Cole, Toronto (2018); The Journal Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2017); Mass Gallery, Austin (2017); SomeTime Salon, San Francisco (2017); and Center Street, New York (2017). Williams has held the SIP Fellowship at the Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, New York (2019), 68 Projects, Berlin (2018), and NY Studio Factory, Brooklyn (2014).