

Lewis Miller
'Curtains'
The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane, Bricks Space
7 May 2022
Preview, 6 May 2022 5 – 8pm

Lewis Miller presents 'Curtains' at Aird's Lane Bricks Space, a body of paintings that interacts with the distinctive architecture of the gallery. Using the window frames of the gallery, formerly a glaziers, both as a light box and as an outline for the dimensions of the paintings; the works act as literal curtains, covering the apertures of the space. They soften the incoming light through paint layers of varying degrees of opacity and transparency causing shades of crimson, viridian and orange to bleed into the space. The outer wire mesh, wooden frames and metal fittings of the windows cast shadows across the canvases while the external variables of daylight and the weather converge with the work to make for a continually shifting and durational encounter. Resembling film stills, the series is looking outward and inward simultaneously; both physically and psychologically.

Aside from one recognisable curtain, other articles, and subjects in the series, variously respond to the title 'Curtains': the blades of a fan, birds wings, florists wrapping paper, a shadow and a door, the reflective surface of water. Miller works intuitively through painting towards an understanding of emotions and objects, both his own and of others. Excerpts from life are restaged and reimagined to form the basis for paintings. Lines of communication are opened between paintings and themes of romance, separation, hope and fear surface and collide.

'Pigeons, close to home', features birds (other than those in the accompanying text) at roost and in flight. Two pigeons at the centre perch on a makeshift wall; a restful audience to an out of view horizon, they look down and away from the viewer looking up at them. 'Don't these city lights bring us together', a painted translucent surface of water hangs from the skylight utilising the light above it to fuse with the space beneath. The surface has been broken and activated, offering an abstracted arrangement of shape and colour rippling back to us. A unifying presence in the space, the work's title also provides a statement and question in the same breath - a wistful line at the shared experience that urban life offers.

The paintings transcend a cognitive journey, piecing together fragments of recollected images and objects, building imitations of spaces from experienced events that are captured consciously and unconsciously. A paused moment or 'presentness' points to possibilities of what happened before this frame and what is to come in the next one. Miller invites the interpretation from the viewer and the narratives that can be possible from deciphering the paintings. Parallel to and overlapping these potential narrative threads is a text written by the artist Anne Fellner for the exhibition, housed in a concertina print together with a series of watercolour illustrations by Miller.

Lewis Miller (b. 1992, Glasgow; Lives and works in Berlin).
 Selected exhibitions: 'Saxophone Ads', Sangt Hipolyt, Berlin, 2021, 'Living as', Loggia, Munich, 2020, 'In to through out', Spoiler, Berlin, 2020, 'Rules of Intimacy', Sangt Hipolyt, Berlin, 2020, 'Draught', BBBerlin, Berlin, 2019, 'Licked', Kate Sansom, Berlin, 2019, 'Coalesce', Glasgow Print Studio, Glasgow, 2015 and 'New Contemporaries', Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, 2015.