

Matt Connors

Tune

29th March – 13th May 2023

Herald St is pleased to present *Tune*, an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Matt Connors taking place at the gallery's Museum St premises. In this presentation, Connors continues an approach to abstraction which is at once studied and intuitive, considered and irreverent. His layered surfaces reveal dark grounds and palimpsests of beaming colour, with forms upon forms building and dissolving structures. Previously working primarily in acrylic, he is increasingly using oil paint in his work, mining the medium's malleabilities and playing with tensions and looseness. Connors is a multidisciplinary artist who also publishes books, writes, and curates, and the music, literature, and everyday visual cues which surround him make their way surreptitiously into his canvases and works on paper. In his words, 'painting is thinking'.

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Ten paintings, and a suite of drawings. The title *Tune* is musical, an adjacency I most often aspire to. But just as much as I am thinking about an orchestra at the opera tuning up, testing notes, finding keys, getting in synch, Or 'tune' simply meaning that magical thing: a song, Or the ecstasy of a listener, upon hearing a track they find exceedingly compelling, shouting (or typing) out the word – 'TUNE!'

I'm also imagining a car's engine struggling to catch until a cog is jostled or a gear is lubricated. Or a machine needing a string passed through a hole and latched onto a spring in order to allow the on/off switch to work.

...parts, a wrench, a baton, a latch, a wedge.

The paintings are filled with such parts and holes. I also contemplated the title *TRAP DOOR*. There's an actual trap door in my studio that leads to very steep, rickety stairs to a basement. I've integrated its presence into my studio routine: opening it, closing it, avoiding tripping over or into it, organizing all movements around it. The door in the floor and the stairs – connecting parts.

To walk down the steep steps into the basement, I have to sort of lean back and slightly bend my knees and be prepared to suddenly sit back on the steps behind me in order to avoid tumbling forward. It feels like a dance, and it feels like music. All of it like a mirror to the difficult and improvised route through which I find my way into and out of my paintings. Sometimes I barely avoid tripping, sometimes I zip down and right back up, Sometimes I almost die.

– Matt Connors

Matt Connors (b. 1973, Chicago) lives and works in New York. Past exhibitions include *Invert*, Lismore Castle (2022); *The Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet As It's Kept*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2022); *L'Almanach 18: 3rd biennale internationale d'Art contemporain du Consortium Museum*, Le Consortium, Dijon (2018); *New York Painting*, Kunstmuseum Bonn (2015); *The Forever Now: Contemporary Painting in an Atemporal World*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2014); *Outside the Lines: Painting: A Love Story*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2014); *Painter Painter*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2013); *Impressionism*, MoMA PS1, New York (2012); *Gas...Telephone...One Hundred Thousand Rubles*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf (2011); and *Concentrations 54: Fergus Feehily and Matt Connors*, Dallas Museum of Art (2011). In 2015, Connors undertook a residency at the Chinati Foundation, Marfa. His work is included in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; and the San Antonio Museum of Art. Connors' work can currently be seen in *Friends in a Field: Conversations with Raoul De Keyser* at Mu.ZEE, Ostend. In 2024, he will present a project at Goldsmiths CCA, London.

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Front space (Anti-clockwise)

Trap Door
2023
Oil on canvas
76.2 x 66 cm / 30 x 26 in
HS18-MC8254P

Untitled
2023
Coloured pencil on paper
23.7 x 17 cm / 9.3 x 6.7 in, unframed
49.7 x 37.7 x 2.5 cm / 19.6 x 14.8 x 1 in, framed
HS19-MC8267D

Retracted Retraction
2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
133.4 x 113 cm / 52.5 x 44.5 in
HS19-MC8262P

Stanchion
2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
35.6 x 30.5 cm / 14 x 12 in, unframed
38 x 32.8 cm / 15 x 12.9 in, framed
HS18-MC8253P

Back space (Anti-clockwise)

Untitled
2023
Coloured pencil and acrylic paint on paper
33.6 x 24 cm / 13.2 x 9.5 in, unframed
58 x 43.6 x 2.5 cm / 22.8 x 17.2 x 1 in, framed
HS19-MC8268D

Thrown Powder Mid-Air
2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
35.6 x 30.5 cm / 14 x 12 in, unframed
38 x 32.8 cm / 15 x 12.9 in, framed
HS18-MC8252P

Invisible Flopist
2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
71.1 x 61 cm / 28 x 24 in
HS18-MC8250P

Untitled
2023
Coloured pencil on paper
2 parts:
Part 1:
25.2 x 17.9 cm / 9.9 x 7 in, unframed
49.4 x 37.5 x 2.5 cm / 19.5 x 14.8 x 1 in, framed
Part 2:
25.2 x 15.7 cm / 9.9 x 6.2 in, unframed
49 x 35.4 x 2.5 cm / 19.3 x 13.9 x 1 in, framed
HS19-MC8272D

Missing Pin
2023
Oil, acrylic and pencil on canvas
162.2 x 136.5 cm / 63.7 x 53.7 in
HS19-MC8264P

Guttering
2023
Oil acrylic and pencil on canvas
105 x 89.6 cm / 41.3 x 35.3 in
HS19-MC8263P