

**FRANCIS UPRITCHARD**

14 March - 26 April 2014

Francis Upritchard's new, larger-scale figures occupy a world that is at once medieval and futuristic. These painted sculptures draw on the gothic tradition of Erasmus Grasser and Lucas Cranach as much as contemporary folk and psychedelia. They are slanted archetypes such as the withered fool or the haute couture blind man. They are silent and meditative, familiar yet distant. Despite their elusiveness, they abound in presence.

Since her first exhibition at the gallery in 2003, *Traveller's Collection*, Upritchard has experimented with the theme of display, evident in her sensitive and considered arrangements of figures, glasswork, textiles and ceramics.

The works in this exhibition were included in two museum shows staged in 2013. The first, *Potato Poem*, took place at MIMOCA, Marugame Genichiro - Inokuma Museum of Contemporary Art in Japan, and the second, *Mandrake*, at The Douglas Hyde Gallery in Dublin. Director John Hutchinson writes; 'With tiny and beautifully modelled hands, delicate feet, pinched faces, and vacant eye sockets, (the figures) seem to be deployed in a communal and enchanted ritual of acquiescence of supplication. It is this emptiness at the heart of Francis Upritchard's works that makes it unusually rich in associations and so oddly timeless; her wan figures become, as we contemplate them, the shells and retainers of our own hopes, fears and projections.'

Francis Upritchard born 1976 New Plymouth, New Zealand, lives and works in London. In 2009 Upritchard represented New Zealand at the 53rd Venice Biennale. Recent solo exhibitions include; *Mandrake*, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, 2013, *Potato Poem*, MIMOCA, Japan, 2013, *War Dance*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, *A Hand of Cards*, Nottingham Contemporary, UK, 2012, *A Long Wait*, Contemporary Arts Centre, Cincinnati, 2012 and *In Die Höhle*, Secession, Vienna, 2010.