

The approach

Stuart Cumberland

Handmade Colour Pictures

10th July – 7th August 2016

Preview: Saturday 9th July 2016, 6 – 9pm

The Approach is pleased to present *Handmade Colour Pictures*, British artist Stuart Cumberland's (b. 1970, Wokingham, UK) fourth solo exhibition at the gallery. On show will be a new body of work that displays a significant departure for the artist, which can be understood simply as a change from the making of paintings to the making of pictures. Cumberland refers to the works presented as 'handmade pictures,' in an attempt to circumnavigate the medium specific concerns of painting and instead examine the field of picture making and the human drive to look.

As a point of inspiration, Cumberland's pictures give a referential nod to hunting portraits by Édouard Manet and Diego Velázquez, wherein both artists depicted men intentionally posed with firearms and animals. Cumberland reinterprets these compositions and reimagines the poses with fresh impetus using newly formed figures, bold flat colour and an undertone of dark humour.

Questionable pleasures that Cumberland is thinking about through self-conscious picture making include looking, hiding, hunting, loving and killing. The works have similarities with 'how to' guides, illustrated instructions and children's books, yet despite their apparent simplicity the images pick-up upon, continue and intelligently play with a history of picture making.

A new inventory of motifs for Cumberland including dogs, guns, cameras, leafs and chairs produce a sense of narrative mystery. Across all of the works is an engagement with the tragicomic, leaving the viewer to slip between the sub-narratives and contemplate the possible connections. Propositions, such as the sitter stood on the chair replacing a light bulb, a fragmented arm shooting a camera or a free-floating rifle are left unanswered.

Peeling back at these graphically rendered motifs, Cumberland investigates ideas of psychoanalysis, voyeurism and of the Benthamian notion of the watcher watching. For instance, *Looking Through a Hole* asks what is it to be watched yet unaware. This controlled tension is also visited in *How to Change a Lightbulb – Blue Chair*, with the mounted camera positioned ready to photograph, yet again there is an absence of any visible photographer or subject. The viewer becomes a participant unravelling and constructing the clues of these unexplained moments, narratives and objects caught in action with no resolve. The pictures are laden with clues but interpretation is slippery and as elusive as the moment between waking and sleeping. While they hint at potential happenings these new pictures reveal no certainty of anything at all.

For images or further information please contact Malik Al-Mahrouky: malik@theapproach.co.uk

The approach

Stuart Cumberland: *Handmade Colour Pictures*

10th July - 7th August 2016

<p><i>Tree Stump at Night</i>, 2015 Oil on linen 55 x 39 1/4 in. (140 x 100 cm)</p>	<p><i>Tree Stump by Day</i>, 2015 Oil and charcoal on linen 55 x 39 1/4 in. (140 x 100 cm)</p>
<p><i>Brown Dog & Man with Gun</i> 2015 Oil on linen 29 1/2 x 21 5/8 in. (75 x 55 cm)</p>	<p><i>Hiding</i> 2016 Oil on linen 66 1/8 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)</p>
<p><i>Dog With Foot & Blue Bike</i> 2016 Oil and charcoal on linen 54 1/4 x 40 1/8 in. (138 x 102 cm)</p>	<p><i>Looking Through a Hole</i> 2016 Oil on linen 66 1/8 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)</p>
<p><i>How To Change a Lightbulb - Blue Chair</i>, 2016 Oil on linen 40 1/8 x 27 7/8 in. (102 x 71 cm)</p>	<p><i>How To Change a Lightbulb</i>, 2016 Oil and charcoal on linen 66 1/8 x 48 in. (168 x 122 cm)</p>