

The approach

Sara Barker
a weak spot in the earth

26th May – 25th June 2017
Preview: Thursday, 25th May 2017, 6 – 9 pm

a weak spot in the earth is the debut solo exhibition of new works by Glasgow-based artist Sara Barker (b. 1980, Manchester). Barker's practice traverses and blurs the thresholds between sculpture, painting and drawing; using these disciplines, and in turn their associated materials and techniques, as a way to create space, both physically and metaphysically. Barker draws on inspiration from Modernist and Post-Modernist (and primarily feminist) writers, such as Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Doris Lessing, Hélène Cixous and Aya Kōda, whose text, *Mirrors*¹, supplies the first line of a newly imagined visual poem composed by Barker. The text navigates us through this exhibition, it is broken up and assigned as titles, both to the show itself and to each of the works within, leading our actual bodies, verse by verse, through the psychological space of the poem:

a weak spot in the earth

*unnatural council
hands in cold looked blue*

*conjunctions
eclipses
oppositions*

*a child slipping
a man losing his hat
in the natural weather*

*hour-watching silver and exact
water is in water
within within within*

*window openings to
tableaus of a rebus*

*materialised secret
gravel in the loam
describing a change*

The poem allows for a sense of pathetic fallacy to be created between the viewer and the works; the transcendental experience of exterior, natural elements brought inside, to be shared within the intimate space of the gallery. Using the poem as a conduit, the works describe emotional nuances and subtleties connected to nature. For this new body of work, there is a tension between drawing that manifests itself within three-dimensional space and the painted two-dimensional surface. The metalwork of these sculptures starts to form shapes, and perhaps letters, characters, and/or signs; the combination of assumed semi-pictorial surface and symbol become allegorical. The linguistic supplements the visual, binding as a final image.

Sara Barker was born in Manchester, UK (1980). She studied at the Glasgow School of Art and lives and works in Glasgow, UK. Selected solo exhibitions include: *CHANGE-THE-SETTING*, Ikon, Birmingham & Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (both 2016); *for myself & strangers*, Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow (2014); *I become almost a shadow*, carlier | gebauer, Berlin (2014); *The subtle knife with Ryder Architecture*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2013). Group exhibitions include: *Geographies of Dust and Air*, Mary Mary, Glasgow (2016); *Signal Failure*, Pace, London (2015); *The End of the 20th Century: The Best Is Yet to Come*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin (2013); *New Order: British Art Today*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2013); *The Geometry of Things*, GAK, Bremen (2013); *Tracing the Century*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool (2012); *Pink Caviar*, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, DK (2012).

For further information or images please contact Antonio de la Hera at antonio@theapproach.co.uk

¹ Kōda, Aya, *Landslides*, Kodansha, 1991 (published posthumously)