

# SPRÜTH MAGERS

**Gary Hume**

**MUM**

**Sprüth Magers, London**

**September 30 - December 23, 2017**

Sprüth Magers is delighted to announce that, after extensive renovations, its London gallery will reopen on Grafton Street on September 29th, 2017. It takes over the building with an expanded exhibition space occupying three floors. The gallery opens with a debut exhibition of new works by Gary Hume. It is his first solo exhibition in the UK since his retrospective at Tate Britain in 2013, and is also the first time that his paintings on paper will be exhibited publicly.

Gary Hume's new body of works on paper mark a critical shift in his practice. Emerging from preparatory sketches, they revealed themselves as a unique and compelling body of work that has led the artist to develop an entirely new painting method. The use of domestic gloss paint is indicative of Hume's practice, yet its effect on the paper ground enables a distinctive interplay between light, depth, and texture that stands in stark contrast to his characteristic aluminium paintings. The paper warps beneath the density of the paint, forming an undulating surface that departs from definitive flatness of his earlier works and creates a diffused reflection of light favouring ambiguity and openness. The formal properties of the new material prevent the artist from being able to scrape back the paint and rework an image as he can with aluminium. Without room for revision, the paintings on paper are much more akin to the medium of drawing, and develop only through the artist's clear perception of the finished image. They are set in very thin aluminium tray frames, and their sculptural surface is unmediated by glass.

The new works on paper present abstracted visions of figures, objects and scenes recalled from Hume's childhood or observed in family photographs. Works that feature the artist's mother as their subject examine the relationship between the two in light of her failing health. *Mum* (2015) features an expansive black surface punctuated by a small white circle at its centre. It illustrates his mother's dementia and the sense that she, too, is gradually disappearing from the foreground. The composition is also evocative of his mother's love of sailing. The play of light on the black surface of the painting simulates a body of open water at night, whilst the white orb suggests the use of stars for navigation. Also on view are a number of aluminium paintings that focus on the artist's contemporary observations. A large-scale portrait of the same name, *Mum* (2017), employs a technique of thicker paint lines to denote figuration rather than the thin ridges of paint that he often uses on aluminium. This allows her features to effectively dissolve within the painting, and her image to appear elusive.

Gary Hume's new paintings on paper act as a meditation on memory. The distortion of their surface questions the consistency of recollection, whilst the truncated forms mimic the ability of the mind's eye to abstract physical and visceral experience into a collection of stilled and disembodied images. Whilst the simple forms within Hume's new paintings are not always easy to decipher it is their ambiguity, and the sensitivity of their narrative, that draws the viewer into an intimate relationship with the works.

A catalogue published by Sprüth Magers and Matthew Marks Gallery will accompany the exhibition. It features an essay from the art historian Dr. Alexander Nagel.

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