

Artists: Sarah Feinmann, Tricia Gillman, John Hoyland, Jamie Kirk, Robin Megannity, Azraa Motala, Katie Tomlinson and Gary Wragg

On 20 March 1984, Castlefield Gallery opened its first exhibition, a solo show of work by **John Hoyland**. Four decades later, this exhibition includes work by the four painters that exhibited with the gallery that year alongside four painters we have gotten to know more recently.

Skid by **Gary Wragg** was made in 1984 and exhibited that same year at Castlefield Gallery. It demonstrates Wragg's ability to immerse himself in the painting process, to materialise the unexpected and emphasise the 'here and now' of painting. *Clothes Horse no Bather 4* (2023) is part of a series of recent works through which Wragg is honing in on the fundamentals of gesture and mark making and the possibilities they have for painting. Both these works exemplify dynamics which are in some way true of all painting, in particular the contrast between the movement of the artist's hands and body whilst making the work and the stillness of the dried paint. As well as other painterly antagonisms such as surface and depth, the vertical and horizontal, physical and emotional space, control and spontaneity.

Jamie Kirk's *Strata* (2022) isolates, suspends and falsifies painterly gestures. What at first might appear as spontaneous freehand shapes are replicated, with the use of machine cut vinyl, and start to form a repeat pattern. The making process has also been interrupted by the application of resin, which entombs swiftly made marks between its slow drying layers. Despite these convoluted tactics the use of pearlescent and textured paint gives the work a shifting and a fluid energy. *Living Room* (2024) involves multiple techniques to create different textures and patterns that

Handout

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attempt to immortalise a scene filled with many objects and memories.

Tricia Gillman's *Carambola* (1982) was exhibited at Castlefield Gallery in 1984 in a two person exhibition with Sarah Feinmann. The work marries the brash ballet of abstract European still lifes with the energetic gestures of American abstract expressionism. *Moments 3 Beneath the Skin* (2019) uses scribble, dustings of pigment, words, images and erasure, to record our conscious awareness, as each present moment emerges, focuses, and melts away. Despite being made 37 years apart and being very different in appearance both of these works share a commitment to thinking about experience. Considering how abstract painting can express multiple layered experiences in one surface, how they can embody and re-configure experience through materials and processes.

John Hoyland is widely recognised as one of the most inventive and dynamic abstract painters of the post-war period. His works evolved over more than half a century. They demonstrate a distinctive artistic personality concerned with colour, painterly drama, both excess and control, and above all, with the vehement communication of feeling. *Welcoming Harvest 6.3.81* (1981) back to the gallery 40 years later is an opportunity to celebrate the diverse possibilities of painting. It is one of four paintings from the early 80s that Hoyland annotated 'Blaise' in his notebooks. It is likely that their titles derive from poems by Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961), a Swiss-French poet and novelist. *Wine Moon 18.9.95* (1995) is one of Hoyland's Bali paintings, inspired by his visits there in the mid-1990s at a time when he sought to create what he referred to as 'cross-cultural' and 'new hybrids' in his works. The motifs on the right hand side are derived from the shapes of

Balinese pennants, a type of tall thin traditional flag.

Sarah Feinmann's work responds to place. She investigates the materiality of the surfaces and artefacts she finds and considers how they might communicate something of the essence of their environments. Her 1989 painting *Umber Field* came after a trip to New Zealand and walks in the Lake District whilst her more recent collage works are drawn from edgeland sites, some of which she repeatedly revisits. Works such as *Outshifts* (2023) begin with photographs that capture the juxtaposition of rural and urban elements in these overlooked spaces. The presence of these photographs in her studio influences the way she constructs, dismantles, and remakes collages with painted and found paper.

Azraa Motala's practice and research explores the lived experiences of British South Asian women. *Untitled* (2024) is a painting of Honister Pass draped in traditional South Asian bridal dupattas. The work references the artist's time spent living in the South Lakes and explores the intersections between landscape, belonging, culture, familial duty, movement and migration. In dialogue with the sitter, Motala's portrait of *May* (2022) conveys different aspects of May's identity, including her Iranian heritage, through her choice of clothing and the inclusion of a pomegranate. Pomegranates being the national fruit of Iran and a symbol of fertility.

Robin Meganity's *switch the loop* (2024) features a zombie knife, something that existed first as a fictional object in films, tv series, and computer games, only later making its way into reality. *the cold read* (2024) places occult items in a futuristic technological environment. These strange still lifes began as digital objects manipulated and adjusted until they were ready to become paintings. Rendering them as paintings softens the edges of their digital crispness, making them present and real somehow but with the eeriness of digital space lingering on in the finished works. Knives appear in many historical works of art, perhaps to display painterly prowess or perhaps to suggest a sense of touch, the sensation of holding their handles or of something being pierced by

them, a sensation which is here set in contrast with the unreal and unnatural nature of these works.

Cavity Sam (2024) by **Katie Tomlinson** appropriates a character from Albrecht Dürer's 1557 studies of human proportion (*De Symmetria Partium in Rectis Formis Humanorum Corporum*). Dürer studied and portrayed humans of all different shapes and sizes in relation to bodily beauty, and argued that there were "many forms of relative beauty". The work also references the game 'Operation' and the way certain constructs are 'put on' or 'taken from' women and their bodies. *I Want Money, Power, and Glory* (2024) displays a merger of Pret-a-Manger, Greggs and Gail's Bakery engulfed in flames. Amongst the sensuous display of sweet treats there is confectionery with yellow icing and lipstick kisses, a reference to consumerism and the commodification of beauty; and in particular Kate Moss's 'Lipstick Kiss' (2001) an edition of works made with the imprint of the model's lipstick-coated lips onto card and another kiss of hers which was auctioned for £60,000 to British businessman Philip Green in 2006. The painting presents an ambiguous narrative with hints of corruption, control, vulnerability and desire. It loosely references *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882) by Édouard Manet in its appearance and its themes of commodification and objectification of women. In many of her works Tomlinson reconsiders, reconfigures, and reclaims moments from painting's at times problematic past.

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