



the seed of its opposite



To accompany the exhibition:

The seed of its opposite

26 October–11 November 2015

Gallery North

Glasgow Kelvin College

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Exhibition organised and curated
by Jai Llewellyn.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank EC for
writing the essay; Shawn Stipling
for the layout and organisation of
the catalogue; all artists involved
for making it possible.

Shelagh Atkinson

Karl Bielik

Richard Caldicott

Fieroza Doorsen

EC

Terry Greene

Vincent Hawkins

Lauri Hopkins

Erin Lawlor

Elfyn Lewis

Jai Llewellyn

James Lumsden

Shawn Stipling

Gwennan Thomas

Foreword

'The seed of its opposite' is an artist's initiative, an exhibition consisting of 14 contemporary abstract painters living and working in Britain today. The group is varied and ranges from emerging to well established artists, all of whom work within a two dimensional framework. Artists were selected and asked to provide a number of pieces for consideration. The final cut being made both to illustrate the broad diversity of practice and also, and most importantly, to try to re-establish connections and networks of thought that are too often polarised or pigeonholed. There has always been a line drawn between the lyrical, gestural painting and that of hard edged geometric abstraction. *'The two positions are contradictory or opposing poles, yet they are held together. It's the continuum that unites them and allows for overlap.'** There are obvious aesthetic differences to be seen, although a vast middle ground exists where a broad range of crossovers occur. Some works in the exhibition show obvious similarities in their use of structure, brushwork or colour, in others the commonalities are not so straightforward, but they are there, underlying and often only clear in the artists intent.

In Shawn Stipling's crisp, linear paintings he plays with the boundaries between flat and suggested three-dimensional space, although apparently finite, they offer an ambiguity and an open engagement. Similarly in Lauri Hopkins' tessellated and somewhat distressed compositions, she offers colour relationships that test our preconceptions of light and dark, continuous shifts are created between shape, form and colour. In James Lumsden's paintings, surfaces are varnished to a high gloss finish, there is a fluidity which is contained under the surface and also within a rigid structure on the picture plane. EC's approach is very different, more vigorous with her use of paint and texture, though there is a comparison to be made with Lumsden, in the balance found between the gesture and

the geometry. Paint being allowed to be paint and contemporaneously the desire to control the material but also to allow its autonomy. Through the employment of various idiosyncratic systems and methods of working, the group collectively demonstrates connections between emotion and intellect, the conscious and the unconscious, the hard and the soft, filled and unfilled space. It is not possible to have a coin with only one side, these contradictions must co-exist in a duality as part of the working process.

Images and ideas are shared between fellow artists, social connections are made where there is an understanding that common concerns run through the work. Networks, an essential ingredient in the coming together of this exhibition, and the role of social media is invaluable to an artist today. It has enabled a sense of community and common ground, a 'level playing field' where there is a disregard of geographical and logistical boundaries. Having only seen the work of the artists involved in a digital format I was keen to realise the potential of an exhibition which could highlight the cross-pollination of ideas that occur online. The screen flattens and regulates the image for the viewer, scale and physicality of the work are lost or altered. Addressing these problems in the transition between the virtual and the actual were of interest to me in the curating of the exhibition. Unlike a studio visit, where the tactile nature of the work can be experienced, digital curation can be less sensitive to those nuances. Though this does leave room for interesting surprises during the hanging of the exhibition. There are also some advantages, particularly when dealing with a large number of works, as in this case. The collating of images and the decision making about how paintings work together can be organised efficiently and well in advance, with fewer logistical problems.

The internet has made it possible to see an astronomical amount of artwork that could never be seen in person and has

brought together a world of artists that may never have met. The old, romantic notion of a solitary recluse is now a rare occurrence. As an artist, I find nothing more exciting than seeing or feeling an affinity with another artist's work. It is an instantaneous reaction and a realisation that they too, have been where you have been. That for a short moment you have shared a path, only perhaps to be redirected or to digress within the field of overarching co-existing thoughts, ideas, approaches and revelations.

There is a cohesiveness, a collective consciousness between the artists, alongside both a balancing and contrast of ideas and expression. This may prompt and lead to a greater insight. You are invited to find your own way through these works, to engage in the process which is truly an account of looking. A visual journey which allows for a fuller understanding of and a response to the images. This communal endeavour opens up new explorations for both the artist and the viewer.

Jai Llewellyn, 2015

* Andy Parkinson, *Why abstraction now?*

The Seed of its Opposite

We often split things off, force things into oppositions, create conflicting ideologies. Perhaps we could instead look at the possibilities of 'opposites' forming something integral, something lively, find human connections, knots and bifurcations in the vast gap or leap that seems to trouble us somehow in a *'culture that's hypnotised by explanation'**. We could, for the sake of integrity, allow for conflicting elements to coexist. This inclusivity need not be equivalent to losing oneself in the boundless but could be an acknowledgement of the other, a toing and froing, cross pollination, fertilisation – the struggle of life itself to attain form. The setting of limits is powerful and helpful, but where those parameters fall can shift differently for each artist in this show, occupying a qualitatively different kind of gap or space; offering a transitional space, an overlap.

The word expression is often misunderstood, I believe, as an evacuation, a kind of blurring out. The expression of something involves an *'organisation of energies'** within the work, it is not a mere discharging of matter. Found, underlying geometries can come into the work, drawing and arrangement. Cast into the arena of discussion such simplistic descriptions as: 'the gesture is theatrical', 'a macho gesture', 'the line is cold', or 'it is cold and intellectual', make little sense. Surely a geometry that is so tied in with life itself is, in fact, full of a richness that is also intellectually very warm. And any gesture that leads to discovery is an essential aspect, not theatre. We could assign feeling and even gender to any specific human act, generalizing and separating without really thinking about the qualitative aspects we are faced with and asked to perceive within it; Losing sight of both what is really specific to a work and that which is more broadly part of it. Complex processes are in action together, feeding and sparking one another into life in subtle and nuanced ways. For example: irrational and rational

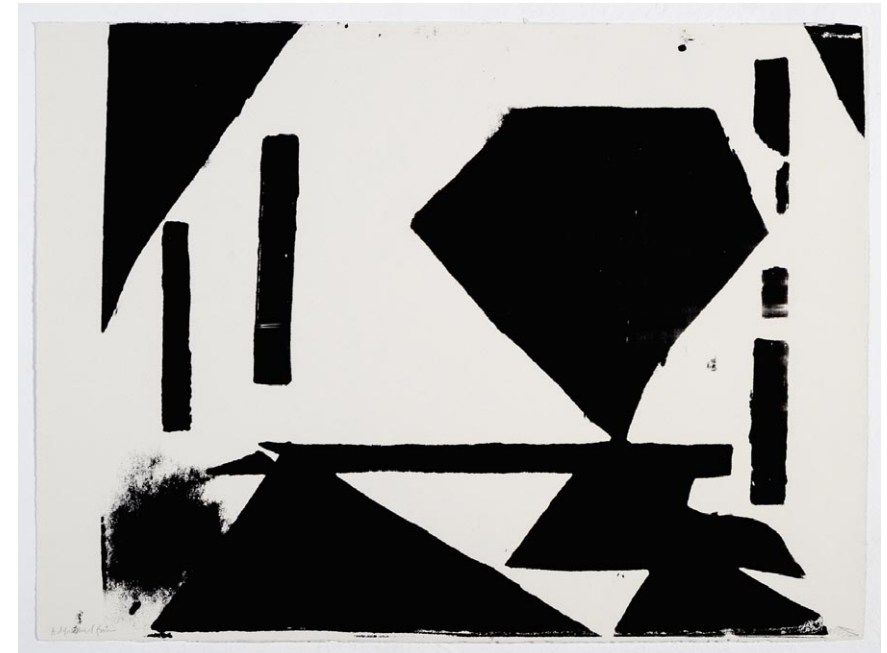
thought, emotional and intellectual logic, objectivity and subjectivity, rational feeling and feeling thought and so on, are not strangers to one another; they are connected on a common axis; they are partners. Relational dialectics puts it that, 'any value pushed to its extreme contains the seed of its opposite'.

'Thus, in renouncing the factitious unity which the understanding imposes on nature from outside, we shall perhaps find its true, inward and living unity. For the effort we make to transcend the pure understanding introduces us into that more vast something out of which our understanding is cut, and from which it has detached itself. And, as matter is determined by intelligence, as there is between them an evident agreement, we cannot make the genesis of the one without making the genesis of the other. An identical process must have cut out matter and the intellect, at the same time, from a stuff that contained both. Into this reality we shall get back more and more completely, in proportion as we compel ourselves to transcend pure intelligence.' Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution.

EC, 2015

* Adam Phillips, British Essayist and psychoanalyst interviewed by Sameer Padania for *Bomb Magazine*.

* John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (1934).



Shelagh Atkinson

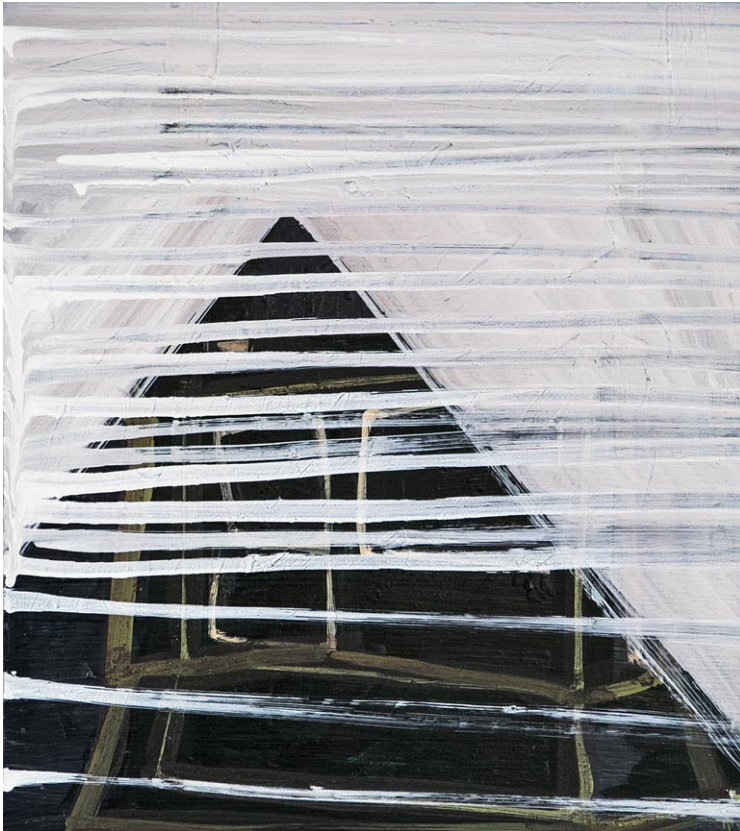
Abstract form, screenprint on paper, 57 x 76cm, 2014



Shelagh Atkinson
Influx, screenprint on board, 18 x 41cm, 2014



Karl Bielik
Powder, oil on birch panel, 30 x 35cms, 2014



Karl Bielik
Smoke, oil on birch panel, 30 x 25cms, 2014



Richard Caldicott
Untitled, acrylic on canvas, 12" x 10" x 3/4", 2015



Richard Caldicott
Untitled, acrylic on canvas, 12" x 10" x 3/4", 2015



Fieroza Doersen
Untitled, oil on canvas 10" x 8", 2014



Fieroza Doersen
Untitled, oil and charcoal on canvas 10" x 14", 2014



EC
Emergence, acrylic, tape & oil-based
household paint on canvas, 15 x 21cm, 2015



EC
Game Outcome, acrylic, card & oil-based
 household paint on canvas, 26 x 36cm, 2015



Terry Greene
Mare st., acrylic on canvas, 18" x 14", 2015



Terry Greene
Private view, acrylic on canvas, 16" x 10", 2015



Vincent Hawkins
Stack, acrylic on paper, 36 x 26cm, 2014



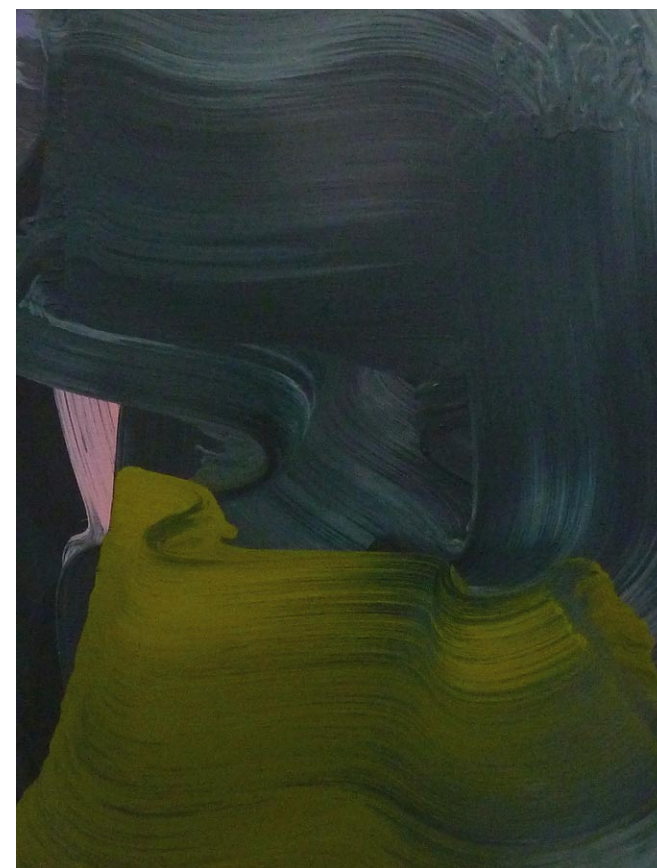
Vincent Hawkins
Dual, Gouache on Paper, 42 x 29.5cm, 2015



Lauri Hopkins
Burst, book cover collage, 32 x 40cm, 2015



Lauri Hopkins
Fold, book cover collage, 32 x 40cm, 2015



Erin Lawlor
Peek, oil on canvas, 61 x 45.5cm, 2015



Erin Lawlor
Hold-up, oil on canvas, 58.5 x 51cm, 2104



Elfyn Lewis
Deffro, acrylic on mdf, 31.75 x 31.75cm, 2015



Elfyn Lewis
Ar Goll, acrylic on mdf, 31.75 x 31.75cm, 2015



Jai Llewellyn
Untitled, acrylic & oil on canvas, 41 x 33cm, 2015



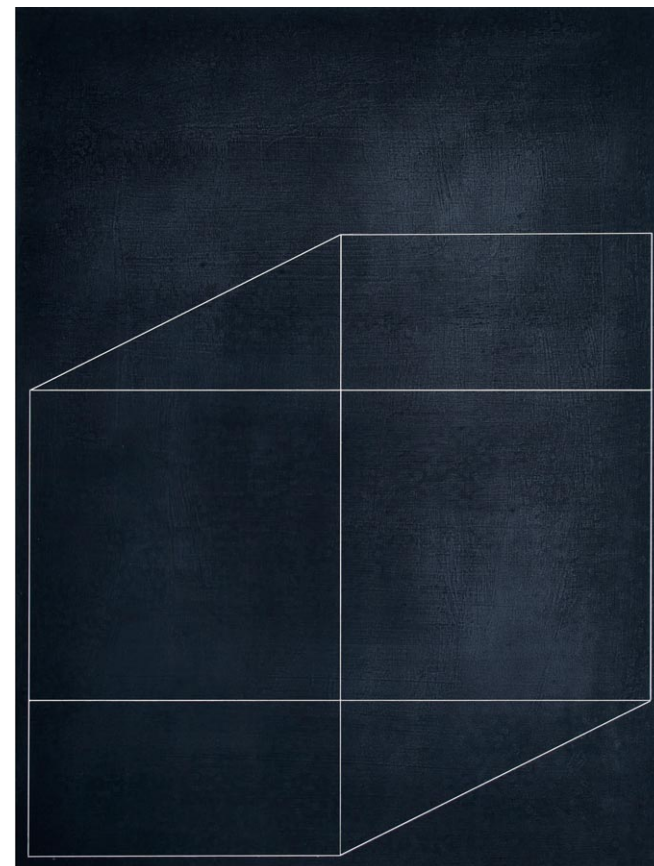
Jai Llewellyn
Untitled, acrylic & oil on canvas, 41 x 33cm, 2015



James Lumsden
Fugue, acrylic on canvas, 30.5 x 30.5cm, 2011



James Lumsden
Echoes, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 50cm, 2013



Shawn Stipling
110, acrylic and gesso on plywood, 300 x 225mm, 2014



Shawn Stipling
163 (Corrubedo), acrylic and gesso on plywood, 370 x 300mm, 2015



Gwennan Thomas
Untitled (pink-green), oil on ply, 22 x 18cm, 2012



biographies

Gwennan Thomas
Untitled (orange-blue), oil on ply, 35 x 25cm, 2013

SHELAGH ATKINSON

Her early studies were of psychology and later communication at Edinburgh Napier University. A multi disciplinary artist she has exhibited extensively both nationally and internationally including recently at Kunming China international print exhibition, a solo exhibition at the Scots Russia institute Edinburgh and *Thoroughly Modern Women* at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery Edinburgh. She is included in the 35th edition of the *Who's Who in Art*, published by the Morven Press. She works from her studio in Edinburgh.

shelaghatkinson.co.uk

KARL BIELIK

Working on a multitude of paintings at a time, Karl Bielik's brew of abstractions are developed in batches. Irregular canvases cover his studio walls and floors, where he shifts from one painting to another, experimenting playfully with mark making. Formal lines taken from photographs and diagrams contrast loose oily wounds, thick emulsions offset light glazes and dribbles. In contrast to this emotive imagery, banal solitary words form Bielik's titles, tempering and balancing the melancholy character of his paintings.

His work has been in numerous shows at home and abroad, most notably The Marmite, Creekside, Lexmark Art Prizes and recently he has been selected for The London Open 2015 at the Whitechapel Gallery in London.

karlbielik.com

RICHARD CALDICOTT

Richard Caldicott is an artist living and working in London. Since graduating from the Royal College of Art he has exhibited widely both nationally and internationally including solo exhibitions in London, New York, Berlin and Zurich.

His works are held in many significant collections including the Kunstmuseum Bonn, Goss-Michael Foundation Dallas and the Peter C. Ruppert Collection, Würzburg Museum, Germany. He is represented by Sous Les Etoiles Gallery, NY, Galerie f5,6 in Munich, Quinietos Cincuenta Gallery, Mexico City and Less is More Projects in Paris.

richardcaldicott.co.uk

FIEROZA DOORSEN

Born in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Lives and works in London

1984–85 Chelsea School of Art, London, Printmaking MA

1981–84 Ravensborne College of Art, London, Fine Art BA

www.fierozadoorsen.com

EC

EC is a London born painter of Italian descent who currently lives and works in London. EC received his BA in 1996 from The Cass, London Guildhall University where he specialised in painting. Whilst there he was one of the recipients of a Sir Owen Rowley fine art prize. Recent exhibitions include *Zappatore*, curated by Sue Kennington for Hickster Projects, Crete Senesi, Tuscany, Italy, August 2015, *Autocatalytic Future Games*, organised by Playpaint at No Format gallery, London, June 2015, *Contemporary British Abstraction*, at SE9 Container Gallery, London, February 2015 and *As Wide As A Door Is Open: Material Images*, curated by Sam Cornish, at Fold Gallery, London 2014. Currently EC is working towards a solo show in 2016.

untitledpainting.wordpress.com

ECartist@rocketmail.com

TERRY GREENE

Terry Greene is a painter living and working in West Yorkshire. His BA in Art & Design was received from Bradford College.

Subsequent to that he received his MA in Theory of Practice from Leeds Metropolitan University. Greene is engaged in an exploration of the duality of paint; as structure (the historically located medium of high art) and as agency (in its natural fluid state). His work can be found in a number of private art collections both in the UK and abroad, and has been seen in numerous exhibitions including the recent *CROSS SECTION/03*, dalla Rosa Gallery, London; *Writhe & Jerk*, Transition Gallery, London; *About Painting*, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester. Greene authors the online Blog: 'Just another painter'.

terrygreenepainting.wordpress.com

terrygreeneart@gmail.com

VINCENT HAWKINS

Vincent Hawkins (b.1959) Herts, England.
Maidstone College of Art 1984–87

Vincent studied painting at Maidstone College of Art in Kent in England. He lives in London and makes paintings on canvas paper and card. He has shown extensively in Britain and abroad including solo shows in Chicago and Paris in recent years.

vincenthawkins.blogspot.co.uk

LAURI HOPKINS

Lauri Hopkins (b.1984) is a British Abstract Artist, living and working in Sussex. Her work crosses disciplines but primarily involves painting, collage and the re-assembling of defunct materials. Inspiration is often drawn from mid-century Architecture and Design, the history of Abstract Art, objects that have fallen out of use and childhood memories. Lauri has exhibited regularly since completing a BA in Fine Art from The University of Chichester in 2012. Her work has been selected for numerous National Art Competitions and appears in group shows internationally.

laurihopkins.com

ELFYN LEWIS

Born in Porthmadog, North Wales. Studied at Bangor University (Foundation) University of Central Lancashire, Preston (degree) and an MA at Cardiff University in fine art. Resident of Cardiff for the past 20 years.

His distinctive abstract paintings are held in a number of public and private collections. His work has been widely exhibited throughout the UK and worldwide: Recent exhibitions include shows at MOMA Cymru/Wales, Gallery Ten Cardiff, Beaux Arts London and the Royal Academy summer show. Has won many awards over the years including the Gold medal at National Eisteddfod of Wales Bala (2009) and Welsh Artist of the year 2010. Has also been awarded two productions grants by the Arts Council of Wales and also a travel grant to visit USA to study the work of the American expressionists.

elfynlewis.com

ERIN LAWLOR

Born Epping, England, 1969. Lived and worked in France 1987–2012. Currently lives and works in London, England.

Lawlor has been exhibiting regularly in both Europe and the US since 2006. She has had solo exhibitions at Galerie Pascaline Mulliez, Paris; Knott Gallery, Brussels; Espace Mezcla, Rouen, and more recently at George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco and Los Angeles, at galerie Klaus Braun, Stuttgart, and a two-person show with Mary Bucci McCoy at Gray Contemporary in Houston.

Recent group exhibitions include shows at Turps Gallery, London; Flowers Gallery, NY and London; RaumX Project Space, London; a3 Gallery, Moscow; Lion & Lamb Gallery, London; Parallel Art Space, NY, Autonomie gallery, Los Angeles; Park Platform for Visual Arts, Tilburg, The Netherlands; Corona Unger gallery, Bremen; Peter Blake Gallery, Laguna Beach.

She is currently represented by George Lawson Gallery, San Francisco, Gray Contemporary, Houston, Texas, and Galerie Klaus Braun, Stuttgart.

erinlawlor.com

JAI LLEWELLYN

Jai Llewellyn b. London, 1977. He Studied Drawing & Painting (BA) and Printmaking (MA) both at Camberwell College of art. He currently lives and works in Scotland. Recent shows include *Push* at the Wright gallery, Michigan, *A Different Dialogue* at PAK gallery, Gistel, Belgium. He recently curated and exhibited in *3 Painters* at the Arc gallery, Stirling, Scotland. He is currently represented by City Transit, art consultancy, Hong Kong, PAK gallery, Antwerp, Belgium, Wright Gallery, Michigan, USA, And Collective, Bridge of Allan, Scotland, Gray Contemporary, Austin TX, USA.

jaillewellyn.com

JAMES LUMSDEN

Born Inverness, Scotland, 1964.

Lives and works in Edinburgh.

Solo exhibitions include Paul Kuhn Gallery, Calgary, Canada (2015, 2012, 2010); Sarah Myerscough Gallery, London (2015, 2013, 2011, 2009, 2005, 2004, 2002); & Collective, Bridge of Allan (2013); MAC, Birmingham (2006); Triskel Arts Centre, Cork, Ireland (2001); Aalborg Triennale, Aalborg, Denmark (2000).

Recent group exhibitions include *Re-define*, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, USA (2014); *Society of Scottish Artists Annual* (2014, 2013) and *RSA Open*, Edinburgh (2012). Recent awards include a B.A.I.R Residency at The Banff Arts Centre, Alberta, Canada (2015); Scottish Arts Club Award, Royal Scottish Academy (2011); Royal Scottish Academy Residencies for Scotland Award (2010) and a Scottish Arts Council Creative Development Award (2008).

jameslumsden.blogspot.co.uk/n

SHAWN STIPLING

Shawn Stipling was born in Chester, Cheshire and now lives and works in Essex UK. In recent years he has exhibited widely in Europe and also in Australia. Forthcoming exhibitions include *Painting, More or Less..*, Transmitter, Brooklyn, NY and *Night and Day*, Gallery Studio van Dusseldorp, Tilburg, The Netherlands.

He is represented by Galerie van den Berge, The Netherlands and Gray Contemporary, Houston, Texas, USA.

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GWENNAN THOMAS

Born in France, 1984

Lives and works in London & Leipzig

2008 Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts London,

2011 BA Hons Fine Art: Painting

gwennanthomas.org