

Press Release

Alexis Harding
Depthplunge

15 November – 15 December
Open Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm

Mummery + Schnelle is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Alexis Harding. In a marked departure from earlier work, Harding's new series of paintings has moved beyond the grid like central motif which served as an armature upon which to present content and process simultaneously. The new work is more critically reduced, organic, theatrical, and corporeal: the wrinkles and sagging patches that form on the canvases explicitly reference bodies and the processes they undergo with the passage of time. A series of enlarged lines and marks bring back a new problematised figure/ground relationship to painting.

By pouring household gloss paint over a base coat of oil paint, Harding forges new ground in the convergence of these two components. He is obsessed with as he states "allowing each work to be given or acquire its own inbuilt logic and life over its making and drying time in the studio". No external tools are used to control the pictorial construction of the painting other than the paints disruption and collapse itself. Like an alchemist Harding mixes his volatile materials with less than total control, prompting and provoking relationships between instinct and time based process; quick irrational decisions made with material (Artists oil paint and household Gloss paint) followed by months of daily observation and correction. The results yield organic gems which often hint at figuration and narrative. Harding has written "in the earlier grid paintings there was a feeling that something was about to go wrong where in the new work it already has, failure seems to have already occurred, it being somehow digested and encoded and then used to make an idea, an image, a painting"

Another duality and incompatibility vividly present within the work is the use of colour. In contrast to the natural conditioning of time, the use of colour is often jarringly artificial. In a number of new works, a bold household Gloss literally carves out a central channel or 'canal' through the oil paints monochrome ground, interrupting this field with more than just its gravitational pull. These new works appear like plugs, stoppages, canals and vertical antennae within painting.

Harding operates as a kind of post non-representational process painter, where the paintings themselves declare an indifference between abstraction and figuration. The work continues to pursue ideas to do with control, failure and contingency.

After finishing his BA (Hons) Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, Alexis Harding has been exhibiting widely including solo exhibitions at Rubicon Gallery, Dublin (2006, 2002, 1999), Marella Arte contemporanea, Milan (2004) and Andrew Mummery Gallery, London (2003, 2000, 1999). Group exhibitions in Museums and public spaces include: Painting in the Noughties, Donnegal, Ireland, 2007; John Moores 23: exhibition of contemporary painting, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, 2004; Shimmering Substance, curated by Barry Schwabsky, Arnolfini, Bristol and Comerhouse, Manchester, 2002. Harding won the John Moores prize for painting in 2004.

For press inquiries, please contact Jenny Christensson (jenny@mummerschnelle.com) for all other inquiries please contact Andrew Mummery (andrew@mummerschnelle.com), Wolfram Schnelle (wolfram@mummerschnelle.com) or visit www.mummerschnelle.com

Next exhibition at Mummery + Schnelle: Marco Bohr, *Floating Cities*, 16 January – 23 February