

The Painted Room

Curated by Caroline Walker

3 November – 22 December 2023
Keizersgracht 241, Amsterdam (NL)



Anna Freeman Bentley | *Illusion never changed*, 2023

Curated by Scottish artist Caroline Walker, *The Painted Room* brings together UK-based artists exploring the interior through a spectrum of distinctive styles, capturing moments of dramatic tension in the domestic sphere, quiet scenes steeped in nostalgia, and gestural, impressionistic representations of life behind closed doors. As an artist concerned with domestic spaces and the underrepresented labour of women in the workspace, Walker has assembled a group of artists whose work resonates with her own, creating a new dialogue on the role of the interior in contemporary painting.

The artists in *The Painted Room* all approach the wide-ranging subject of interiors in their work using distinctive approaches to paint handling and individual creative voices, from the naturalistically observed spaces described in the paintings of Anna Freeman Bentley, Mike Silva, Caroline Walker and Elena Rivera-Montanes to Gareth Cadwallader's highly constructed and meticulously executed interiors.

The spaces created by Nick Goss, Minyoung Choi, Andrew Cranston, Cece Philips and Hettie Inniss sit somewhere perhaps in the middle, while employing elements of realism, they also appear to materialise from a place of memory and the imaginary.

Walker notes, "*The paintings in the exhibition explore the possibility of the interior; as a place of refuge from which to view the outside world, a personal space for memory and longing through the objects which inhabit it, or a site of constructed reality.*"

The interiors range from private scenes of homelife, a film set located in a museum that was once a house, the interior of a cafe and other much less locatable spaces, some suggesting the idea of an interior rather than anywhere specific. What they all share though is a sense of the everyday, of interiors that envelop the stuff of daily life, and the purpose of capturing this in paint is either to document, elevate, imbue with narrative or transform the way we see these spaces.

A new publication will be published on the occasion of this exhibition, available in December 2023.

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About the artists

Gareth Cadwallader (b. 1979, Swindon, UK) is a London-based painter whose works are at once both dreamlike – almost lysergic – and rigorously formal, almost completely diffusing the limits of figuration and abstraction. His scenes are familiar, yet exist outside of specific space and time, held at a point of electric tension by neurotically rigorous consideration.

Cadwallader studied at the Royal College of Art, London (UK), Slade School of Fine Art, London (UK), and Hunter College, New York, NY (US). He has recently shown at *The London Open* at the Whitechapel Gallery, London (UK) and the FLAG Art Foundation in New York, NY (US).

Minyoung Choi (b. 1989, Seoul, KR) lives and works in London (UK). Choi graduated from the MFA Painting Course at the Slade School of Fine Art, London (UK) in 2017. Choi's works, which straddle the boundary between surrealism and real life representations, often function in relation to one another as a series of meditations on a particular theme or concept. Objects, images and patterns of light recur among her paintings, creating a sense of cohesion, as if these pictures all belonged to the same dusky, strangely lit dream. Light is of utmost importance to Minyoung's pictures, its various, radiating sources – the moon, a laptop screen, a television, a lamp – often providing the focal point of the composition.

Choi's recent solo shows include: *Tangent Worlds* at Galeria Pelaires... Cabinet, Palma de Mallorca (ES); *Always There* at Lychee One, London (UK) and *Things that happen when we are not looking* at Lychee One, London (UK). Her works can be found in private and public collections worldwide such as the X Museum, Beijing (CN); EF Education First Art Collection, London (UK) and Zurich (CH) and the HSBC Art Collection, London (UK).

Andrew Cranston (b. 1969, Hawick, UK) is a Glasgow-based painter whose narrative vignettes are culled from both his personal history and literary and anecdotal sources. Cranston's often darkly humorous and surreal compositions effect a layered referentiality by incorporating varnish and collage. He often uses hardback book covers as a support for his paintings, re-texturing their surfaces with dense layers of paint in a technique that recalls Post-Impressionists such as Pierre Bonnard and Édouard Vuillard.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Never a joiner* at Ingleby Gallery, Edinburgh (UK); *If you see something that doesn't look right* at Modern Art, London (UK) and *Waiting for the Bell* at Karma, New York, NY (US). Cranston's work is represented in the collections of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (AU); He Art Museum, Foshan (CN); Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL (US); Loewe Foundation, Madrid (ES); National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh (UK) and Portland Art Museum, OR (US) among others.

Anna Freeman Bentley (b. 1982, London, UK) is an artist based in London (UK). Her painting practice explores the built environment, architecture and interiors, inviting emotive, psychological and semiotic readings of space. With an intense, regularly dark palette and energetic yet often intricate brushwork, her paintings depict all manner of places – derelict factories and warehouses, baroque buildings, shops, cafes, and modern industrial architecture. With a particular focus on the relationships between the design of architecture, its function and use, how these uses change over time, and how streets, areas, communities and cities decline, regenerate and gentrify, Freeman Bentley's practice documents the changing vocabulary of architecture and captures some of the complex dynamics, atmospheres, politics and states of mind that these places engender.

Freeman Bentley studied painting at Chelsea College of Art, London (UK), before graduating with an MA in Fine Art from the Royal College of Art, London (UK), in 2010. She has had solo exhibitions in Berlin (DE), Venice (IT) and Los Angeles, CA (US), residencies in London (UK) with the Florence Trust and with Pied à Terre Michelin-starred restaurant, and participated in group exhibitions including the *Prague Biennale 5* in 2011 (CZ); *London Now* at Space K, Seoul (KR) and *Shelf life* at Malborough Gallery, London (UK). Her works can be found in private and public collections worldwide such as Saatchi, London (UK), and The Basma Al Sulaiman Museum of Contemporary Art in Jeddah (SA).

Nick Goss (b. 1981, Bristol, UK) is an Anglo/Dutch artist based in London (UK). He layers personal and collective history on the canvas through scenes of confident accretion and erasure, constructing and reconstructing phenomena that never had physical form. His paintings clearly summon the space of dreams, where time, space and identity slip, but the sense of a journey propels artist and viewer forward, a concept which is mirrored in his sound-based work sampling natural and interlinking ecosystems.

Goss has been the subject of five solo exhibitions at Josh Lilley, London (UK), along with multiple solo shows at Simon Preston, New York, NY (US) and Contemporary Fine Arts, Berlin (DE). His work is held in collections including the Zabudowicz Collection, London (UK), and Pallant House, London (UK); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (US); the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX (US) and the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH (US).

Hettie Inniss (b. 1999, London, UK) is a London-based artist and recent graduate from the Painting MA course at the Royal College of Art, London (UK). By working from her involuntary memories Inniss takes a Proustian approach to making, focusing on the unexpected moments where our senses are stimulated and the mind transports us to familiar or eerily unknown spaces. She uses her awareness of the constructability of memories as a tool to look beyond identity in a binary way.

During her time at the Royal College of Art, London (UK), Inniss has been awarded the Sir Frank Bowling Scholarship (2022), which supports students from Black African and Caribbean diaspora heritage, as well as the ColArt Windsor and Newton Bursary (2023). Her most recent exhibitions include: *Let Me See the Colts* at Josh Lilley, London (UK); *Somewhere In Between* at Hew Hood Gallery, London (UK); *Fluidity* at The Night Café, London (UK); *RBA Rising Star* at Royal Overseas League, London (UK) and *Impressions* at Subtitle Labs in London (UK). Inniss' work is held in several private collections.

Cece Philips (b. 1996, London, UK) is a London-based painter whose luminous compositions explore the associations we hold towards certain actions, dress, even mannerisms in order to intervene in historical canons. Working from a combination of archival sources, fiction, and memory Philips' approach to postures and composition rewrites canonical imagery to imagine both a different subject and viewer. These subjects are depicted in a rich colour palette, with an attention to light and space that lends the work a psychological and narrative depth – details that lead us through and beyond the work and activate the viewer's own imagination.

Philips recently graduated with an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art in London (UK). Her solo exhibitions include: *Walking the In-Between* at Peres Projects, Seoul (KR); *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes* at Peres Projects, Berlin (DE); *Between The Dog And The Wolf* at ADA Contemporary Art Gallery, Accra (GH); *Memories of The Future* at Post Gallery, Zurich (CH) and *I See in Colour* at HOME, London (UK).

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Elena Rivera-Montanes (b. 1998, Frimley, UK) is a British painter based in London. She received her BA (Honours) in Fine Art: Painting from Wimbledon College of Arts and was awarded the Prunella Clough Residency Prize upon graduating.

Primarily exploring themes of time, loss, and observations of life, Rivera-Montanes depicts interior and domestic spaces that are often familiar to her. Constructed through a nostalgic colour palette and photographic quality, she stitches together memories, overlooked moments and personal history to tell stories, prompting the viewer to perceive the paintings in relation to their own lives or experiences. Although many of the paintings are devoid of figures, the work in fact conveys friends and family who inhabited these spaces, remembered through belongings, objects and their sentimental value.

Evoking a familiarity most can respond to, the work floats between the past and present. With reference to photographs she has taken herself, or found in her family album, Rivera-Montanes collages these liminal spaces to form fragmented moments in time, which explore the ambivalence between the places and people she can remember and what has been forgotten. Through the process of painting these moments, she aims to mirror how we recall, blur and rewrite our memories.

Mike Silva (b. 1970, Sandviken, SE) lives and works in London (UK), where he paints portraits, interiors and still lifes that are intimately connected to personal memory. Working from photographs taken on film and archived over the years, mostly of his acquaintances, friends, lovers, and the environments they once communally inhabited—the artist creates a tender sense of celebration tinted with melancholy. Rooted in the London of the '90s or early '00s, many of the images Silva paints from, carry the attraction of the innate beauty of youth, as well as the inherent sadness of a photograph being taken of a moment that no longer exists. Silva's interiors or domestic spaces expose quietly observed moments such as when light hits a particular wall or floor of a shared bedroom, kitchen or living room – evoking a feeling of nostalgia or longing for places that were inhabited only for brief periods.

Mike Silva's solo and group exhibitions include: *New Paintings*, The Approach Gallery, London (UK); *Portraits and Interiors*, Anton Kern Gallery, New York, NY (US); *Interiors*, The Approach Gallery, London (UK); *Reconfigured*, Timothy Taylor, New York, NY (US) and *10 for No 10*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (UK), among others. Silva's work can be found in the Tate Collection, London (UK); the British Council Collection (UK) and the Saatchi Collection, London (UK), among others.

About Caroline Walker

Caroline Walker (b. 1982, Dunfermline, UK) lives and works in London (UK). She completed her MA at the Royal College of Art, London (UK) in 2009 and her BA at the Glasgow School of Art (UK) in 2004. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Women Observed*, K11, Shanghai (CN); *Lisa*, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (UK); *Caroline Walker: Birth Reflections*, The Fitzrovia Chapel, London (UK); *Windows*, KM21, Kunstmuseum, The Hague (NL); *Women's Work*, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham (UK); *Nearby*, GRIMM, New York, NY (US).

This year, Walker has been part of the following group exhibitions: *Real Families: Stories of Change*, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (UK); *Anholt, Makinson, Mortimer, Smith, Walker: New Positions in British Painting*, Telegraph Foundation, Olomouc (CZ); *Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (UK); *PUBLIC PRIVATE*, Pond Society, Shanghai (CN); *Traces of Displacement*, Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (UK); *Finding Family*, Foundling Museum, London (UK).



Caroline Walker in her studio, 2022 | Photo by Peter Mallet

With special thanks to all participating artists and their representing galleries.

Works by Caroline Walker can be found in many international collections including: Aishti Foundation (LB); Arts Council of England (UK); AkzoNobel Art Foundation (NL); The Fleming Collection (UK); He Art Museum (CN); High Museum of Art, GA (US); Huamao Beijing Foundation (CN); Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL (US); ING Collection (NL); Jimenez-Colon Collection (PR); Kistefos Museum (NO); Kolon Group Collection (KR); Kunstmuseum, The Hague (NL); Longlati Foundation (CN); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (US); Museum Voorlinden (NL); National Museum Wales (UK); OUTSET/RCA acquisitions, Royal College of Art (UK); Pérez Art Museum Miami, FL (US); Pond Society (CN); The Rachofsky Collection, TX (US); Rosenblum Collection (FR); Saatchi Collection (UK); Shetland Islands Council (UK); Sifang Art Museum (CN); The University of Cambridge (UK); The UK Government Art Collection (UK); University of Warwick (UK); Woong Yeul Lee Collection (KR) and Yale University Art Gallery, CT (US) among others.

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