

Rachel Howard

British artist Rachel Howard (b. 1969, Easington, County Durham UK) plays with the tensions between control and chaos, order and entropy, making and unmaking, beauty and destruction. She revels in the sheer joy of her material, the intense physicality of her process grapples with notions of uncertainty, fragility, beauty and horror. Over the past 25 years, religion, repetition, mortality, madness and violence have been recurring themes in the work. A student of both Fine Art and Art History, the art of the past is as essential as the use of the endless portal of the internet, as a fresh source of constant inspiration and dialogue with the world around.

In Howard's hands paint can be atomised, poured, smeared, scuffed, layered, sprayed, deleted and erased, to achieve the desired 'feeling'. These sometimes unapologetically emotional paintings can be very large in scale or tiny vignettes of tragedy. Howard often displays an irreverence for her material, for example in the 90's and early 2000's Howard used only household gloss, wanting to humanise this functional medium used mainly for painting doors and windows. Using gravity as an invisible paintbrush to get the desired effect, it relinquished her from the piety of using a traditional oil paint and was a nod to her heroes, the abstract expressionists of the not too recent past. The past decade has seen a return to oil paint (not revisited since her teens) and once more, a desire to use this medium in an obtuse manner. Here, the paint is sprayed and atomised over nets used as gigantic brushes, producing large alizarin crimson abstract paintings. Smaller works are built up and sanded back, then grids constructed with oil paint are unpicked and destroyed with turps, gravity and varnish creating a palimpsest, suspending the action in time. All these 'techniques' are utilised and invented in a quest to achieve the desired 'feeling'.

Howard was born in County Durham in 1969 and graduated from Goldsmiths College, London, in 1991. She was awarded the Princes Trust Award in 1992, was shortlisted for the Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2004 and received the British Council Award in 2008.

Recent solo exhibitions include: *Paintings of Violence (Why I am Not a mere Christian)*, MASS MoCA, Massachusetts, US (2018); *Repetition is Truth - Via Dolorosa*, Newport Street Gallery, London, UK (2018); *Der Kuss*, Blain|Southern, London, UK (2018); *Rachel Howard*, MACRO Testaccio, Rome, IT (2016); *At Sea*, Jerwood Gallery, Hastings, UK (2015); *Northern Echo*, Blain|Southern London, UK (2014); *Folie à Deux*, Blain|Southern, London, UK (2011); *Repetition is Truth*, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples, IT (2011); *Still Life / Still Here, Rachel Howard, New Paintings*, Sala Pelaires, Palma de Mallorca, ES (2011).

Recent group exhibitions include: *Age of Terror*, Imperial War Museum, London, UK (2017); *Playground Structure*, Blain|Southern London, UK (2017); *Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick*, Somerset House, London, UK (2016); *Summer Exhibition 2016*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2016); *Settle Opere per la Misericordia, 4th edition*, curated by Mario Codognato, Pio Monte della Misericordia, Naples, IT (2016); *Sleepless, Beds in History and Contemporary Art*, 21er Haus, Vienna, AT (2015).

Howard's work can be found in public and private collections including: Ackland Art Museum, North Carolina; Museum van Loon, Amsterdam; Olbricht Collection, Berlin; Pio Monte Della Misericordia,

Naples; The wareHouse, Wieland Collection, Atlanta, The Imperial War Museum, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Jerwood Collection, UK; Arts Council Collection, London.

The artist lives and works in the UK.