

## Rachel Howard

The work of Rachel Howard (b. 1969, Easington, County Durham UK) navigates the space between the abstract and the figurative, with paintings that explore the fragility of the human condition and the complexity of the emotional spectrum, from suicide and mental illness to joy and sensuality.

The opposing aspects of certainty and uncertainty are expressed in Howard's paintings through a tension that she creates between the subject matter and the physicality of her process. Often working on four or five pieces simultaneously, she applies her colours, lets them rest, then disturbs them with solvents, varnishes, or successive layers of paint, a process she refers to as 'unpicking' the painting - a push and pull between control and relinquishing control.

Early in her career Howard began utilising common household gloss paint, leaving it to separate in the can so that the colour pigment sinks beneath a layer of thick, sumptuous varnish. The clear gloss and pure colour are then worked upon the canvas separately. Her most-recent series of large and smaller scale paintings explore the idiosyncratic qualities of oil paint, unpicking the accepted rules of engagement with this most traditional of mediums. Howard explores the reverie associated with oil, and in a process of applying and then removing paint creates a palimpsest.

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 a variety of public and private collections, amongst others: Ackland Art Museum, North Carolina; Museum van Loon, Amsterdam; Tate Archive, London; David Roberts Foundation, London; Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas; Olbricht Collection, Berlin; Pallant House, Chichester; Pio Monte Della Misericordia, Naples; The wareHouse, Wieland Collection, Atlanta and the Murderme and Hiscox collections, London.

The artist lives and works in the UK.

