

Recent Acquisitions 2015

Simmons & Simmons
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Cover Image: Alex Gough

Wilderness in paint 21 (detail)

Foreword

Simmons & Simmons continues to collect significant works by early-career artists, operating in our communities. The works in this small exhibition are all fine examples of our acquisition policy.

A collection that does not continue to collect will ossify. Since our collection began nearly 30 years ago, it has always focused on early-career artists – in that way our (small) acquisition budget goes much further. There is also something special for us in supporting artists early in their journeys – our purchase of a significant work gives the artist access to our collection, and a new audience. It also hopefully provides some financial support. And it provides the firm, and its partners and staff, with the opportunity to follow the artist's development, and to continue to engage. In many cases, we've bought only one work from an artist – but there are also plenty of examples of multiple purchases over an artist's early years – Gary Hume and Tracey Emin are both good examples from the collection.

Five of these works were sourced from the *Painting About Painting* exhibition in 2014/2015. These works were greatly admired as part of that show, and I am delighted that we have been able to acquire them. We are very pleased to welcome into the permanent collection two majestic works by *Painting About Painting* artist Andrew Hewish, *Scylla* and *Charybdis*, for what lawyer hasn't found him or her-self in that dilemma?

All of the works exhibited here are by artists new to the collection. I am delighted to welcome them. I look forward to watching them develop. And I congratulate them on the beauty and intensity of their practices.

The text on each work has been written by members of the firm's Art Network. There is a short piece on the role on the Art Network at the back of this catalogue. These are all staff at the firm – not professional art writers – but they have done themselves proud in their insight, and their obvious love for) the works. Their comments will be turned into Art Cards, which will stand by the works when they find a permanent home around the firm, to elucidate, explain and engage partners, staff and visitors with these new works in our collection.

I would also like to thank our curator, Stuart Evans.

Our collection has a special place at the heart of the firm – I am very pleased to welcome these new works to it.

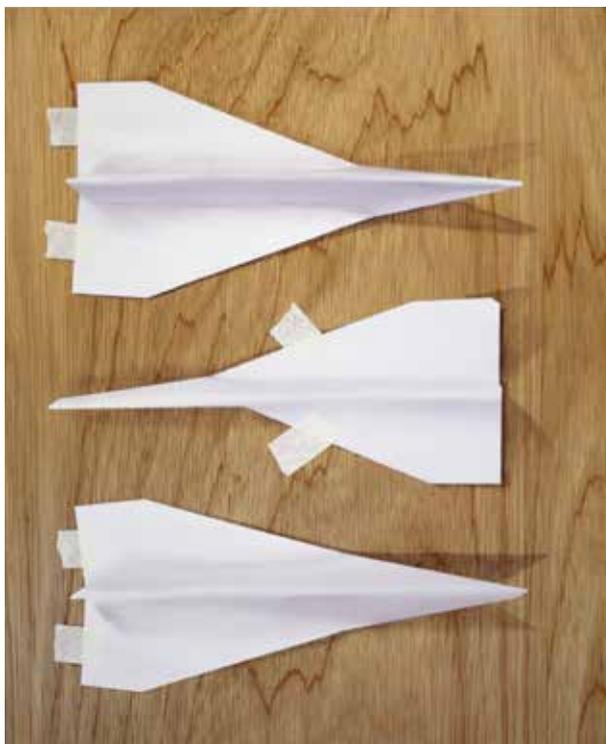
David Stone

Art Partner, Simmons & Simmons

June 2015



Sacrament VII
2014
120 x 90 cm
Oil on wood panel
Acquired January 2015



Planes
2014
40 x 50 cm
Oil on wood panel
Acquired January 2015

Alastair Gordon

In his “Natural History”, Pliny the Elder told the tale of two rival painters in the fifth century B.C., Zeuxis and Parrhasius, who were competing to see who could produce the most realistic painting. The story goes that Zeuxis had painted a picture of grapes so realistically that birds were deceived enough to peck at the fruit. After Parrhasius finished his painting, he invited Zeuxis to his studio; Zeuxis tried to lift the curtain from the panel to see the painting underneath. To his surprise, the panel was a painting of a curtain. Zeuxis conceded that Parrhasius was a better painter: whereas he had deceived only birds, Parrhasius had fooled a fellow artist.

It is one of the founding myths of the history of art and ‘trompe-l’œil’ (literally ‘fool the eye’) paintings have been a feature of European taste ever since Renaissance artists took Pliny’s story as a challenge to be risen to if they were to surpass the ancients. Alastair Gordon is a playful participant in and commentator on this tradition, depicting humble artists’ materials such as paper and masking tape with extraordinary verisimilitude. There’s an austerity to his pictures that recalls a strand of 17th century Dutch still-life

painting that rejected lobsters, silver and other symbols of Golden Age conspicuous consumption, in favour of racks of letters and newspapers. Edwaert Colyer’s pieces in the Tate and V&A collections are good examples of this sort of work being made for an enthusiastic English market.

Gordon is clearly interested in moments and objects that seem trivial and how they can be elevated by the act of painting. In *Sacrament VII*, Gordon has painted the blank sheet from his sketch book that usually represents the beginning of his creative process and in doing so provides an opportunity to imagine the possibilities of what could have been painted on the paper. Perhaps the suggestion is that no work is truly ‘finished’ until the viewer has had the chance to project meaning and an interpretation onto it, drawing on his or her own creativity, life experiences and visual memory. *Planes* continues this game by suggesting the ultimate low-status fate for a piece of paper out of the hands of the artist – the paper aeroplane. Both pictures invite reflection on fakery in art and how difficult it can be to define the frontiers between virtuoso imitation and an intention to dupe the viewer.

About the artist

Alastair Gordon (born 1978) is a London-based artist. He was artist-in-residence for Departure Arts Centre in Limehouse, London 2012-15 and is represented by BEARSPACE, South London. He graduated with an MA in Fine Art from Wimbledon School of Art in 2012 and a BA in Painting from Glasgow School of Art in 2002.

Jon Sharples

Co-Chair, Simmons & Simmons Art Network.



Wilderness in paint 21

2014

101 x 161 cm

Pigment, acrylic binder, gouache, gesso, polyester and canvas

Acquired February 2015

Alex Gough

Alex Gough's work is strongly influenced by his Finnish heritage and his memories of a lifetime of visiting Finnish Lapland. Wilderness in paint is a series of works that employ a wide spectrum of colours and shades to capture phenomena such as the Aurora Borealis, intense twilight and incredibly cold temperatures within the Arctic forests of Lapland during mid-winter. What he is trying to establish through his painting is a non-illustrative, non-narrative expression of pure experience.

"I attempt to bring together, within my painting, two separate experiences: one is in nature, and one is in paint. The relation between the two is not of duplication but what I refer to as equivalence. These experiences are bound with a sense of openness of being that is experienced in these encounters with Wilderness, to create a Wilderness in paint."

In this painting, Gough has used his characteristic 'double-scrimmed' canvas. As such, he is working on two surfaces, one stretched on top of the other. Initially in his practice the polyester outer surface functioned as a veil – a nod to

the 'veil of experience' of phenomenology – which served to alter significantly the painting on the lower canvas layer both in colour and drawing terms. Here we can see a new development in his practice, where he has brought the paint both through the upper layer and painted on top, which creates a strange depth of field. The 'veil', with its obfuscating and reflective quality, acts in contrast to the vivid colour and fine detail of smooth glossy paint – giving the illusion of the slow emergence of this active surface, as if through a wintry haze or several metres of ice.

An emphasis on openness, of not determining an outcome for the viewer, is key, and the viewer's eye is not able to settle from one moment of experience to the next. There is a silence here, a determination to live in the paint that is not possible to articulate in language. Like his experience in Lapland, Gough is embedded in a tacit knowledge of experience through a practice that transmits aspects of that knowledge to the viewer in the language (and reflections on this language) of painting.

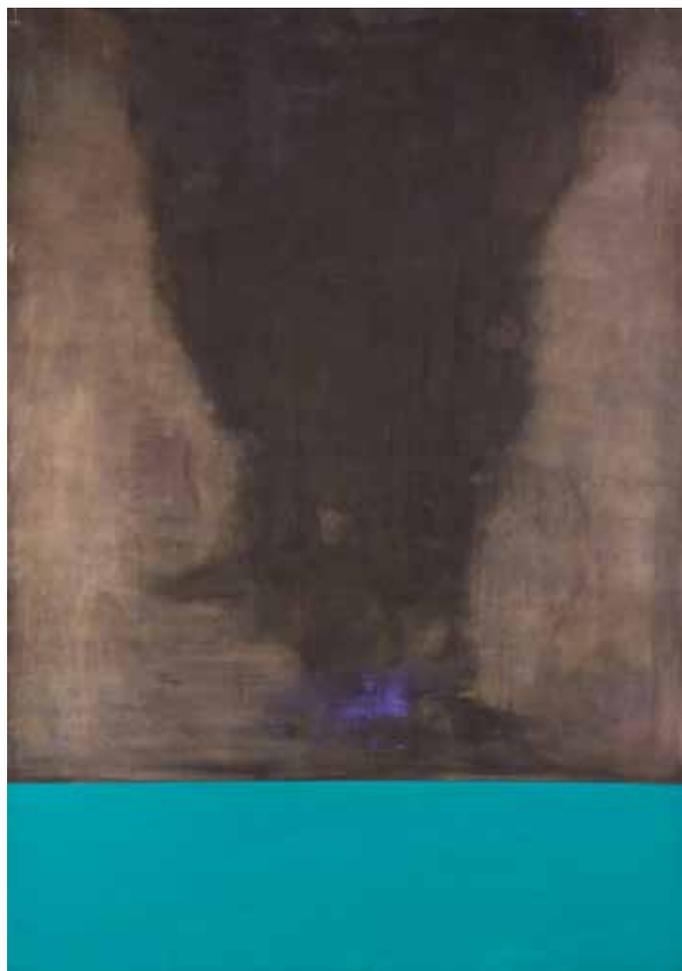
About the artist

Alex Gough (born 1981) lives and works in London. He completed his Foundation studies at Chelsea College of Art in 2002 and BA Hons Painting at Camberwell College of Art in 2005. In 2011 he graduated from City and Guilds of London Art School with an MA in Fine Art. He was a resident artist at Centre for Recent Drawing from 2009-2011 and is currently a resident artist at Block 336 gallery in Brixton.

Klaudia Mach
Trainee, Financial Services



Scylla
2014
152 x 245 cm
Egg tempera on linen on board
Acquired April 2015



Charybdis
2014
152 x 245 cm
Egg tempera on linen on board
Acquired April 2015

Andrew Hewish

In *Scylla* and *Charybdis* Andrew Hewish invokes the language of the 'autonomous' artwork of post-war colour field painting in his use of the minimalist colour blocks and material/action in the upper portions of the canvasses. Colour field painting emerged out of the attempts of several artists such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman in the late 1940s to devise a modern, mythic art. Seeking to connect with the primordial emotions locked in ancient myths, rather than the symbols themselves, they sought a new style that would do away with any suggestion of illustration or narrative.

As a general rule, abstract painters really don't like it when people look at their work and say things like 'this bit kind of reminds me of a sofa, and that looks like a map of Australia' as if the whole thing were some sort of magic eye picture. Hewish, on the other hand, seems to revel in opening up possibilities of a lyrical interpretation/association for the viewer, playing on the human desire to generate narrative or interpretable detail from our visual world. The bright blocks of colour at the base of the canvasses operate like miniature stages, bathed in limelight, onto which the viewer can

project a story. For instance, the electric blue of *Charybdis*, pressed down under the weight of black earth, reminds me of the Grotta Azzurra, a sea cave on the island of Capri that is flooded with a brilliant blue light from below. Or perhaps the heavy blue twilight of one of Whistler's *Battersea Nocturnes*. The dissonance created by the bright bands of colour abutting the expanse of darkness recalls Magritte's *Empire of Lights* series of paradoxical, surreal images of night-time streets, lit only by a single street light, beneath a daytime sky.

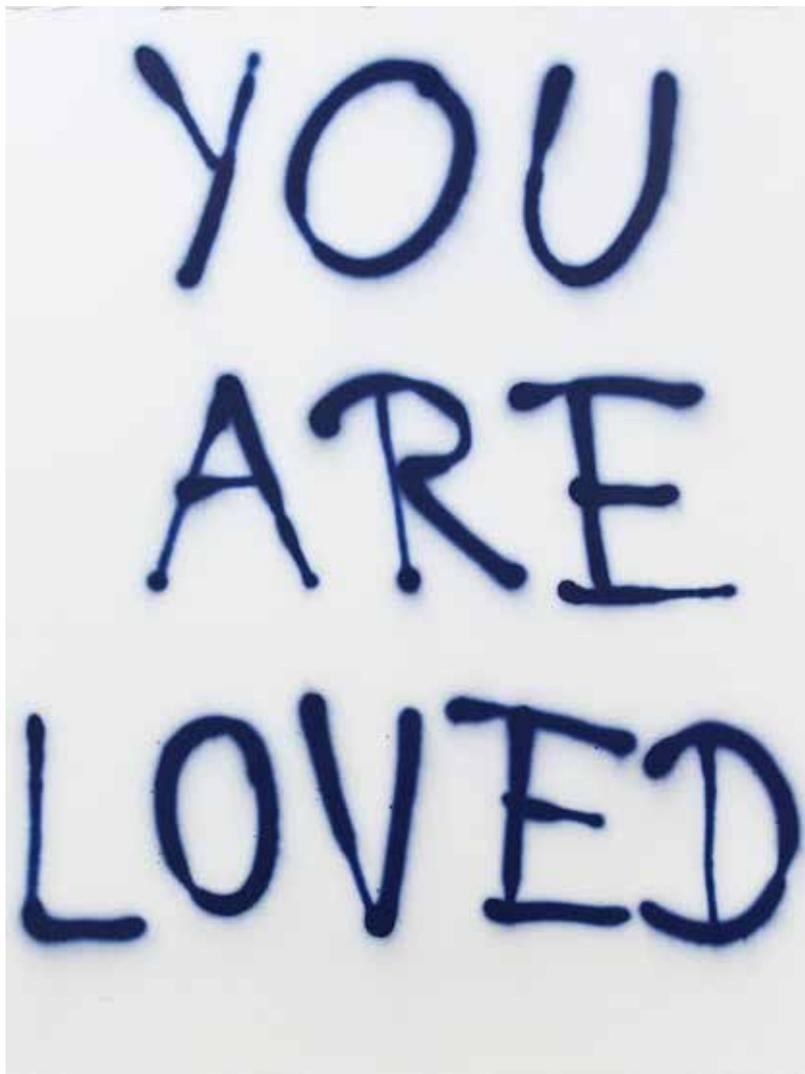
Interested in the life of the object, part of Hewish's practice is invested in the play of material and the way that it asserts itself against overdetermination by the artist. Beauty happens within a couple of feet. Then the nuances of colour, as of an indigo emerging from the dusk, trigger little shocks of perception. Closeup viewing may persuade you that you have underrated your powers of visual discrimination. Look long, for best results. You may feel lonely, but that's by design: being stuck between *Scylla* and *Charybdis* can never be an entirely comfortable experience.

About the artist

Andrew Hewish lives and works in London. He graduated MFA from the College of Fine Arts in New South Wales, MRes from the London Consortium, and is completing his PhD at the Royal College of Arts. He founded and is the current Director of the Centre for Recent Drawing (C4RD), a London museum space for the exploration and discussion of current drawing practice and thought. He has exhibited at the Wallace and Zabludowicz Collections in London, and the VII Biennale di Soncino, Italy. He is included in the collections of MOMA and the V&A.

Jon Sharples

Co-Chair, Simmons & Simmons Art Network



You Are Loved

2013

180 x 140 cm

Spray-paint on gesso paste on plywood

Acquired January 2015

Jeremy Hutchison

You Are Loved is one of 11 panels which together constituted *Demand and Supply* (2013), the winning artwork in the Art Projects Award at the 2015 London Art Fair. The work was originally commissioned as a performance for the Liste18 art fair in Basel, in which Jeremy Hutchison outsourced all creative decision-making to an investment banker, who instructed Hutchison as follows: (1) enlist an anti-capitalist protester; (2) give him 11 white boards and 3 cans of aerosol paint; (3) the protester must write whatever he wants; (4) the artist must act as gallerist; (5) the work must take place in the booth; and (6) the profits must be split between artist, banker and protester.

The resulting work tests the distinction between the making, exhibiting and selling of art and raises the question of where ‘authorship’ resides in this unlikely chain of events. It is Hutchison’s assertion that the art market itself is the “ultimate author of the work”. The whole spectacle recalls Andy Warhol’s dictum that “making money is art and working is art and good business is the best art”. According to Gregor Muir, the director of the ICA, we are now in the age of the “market-native” artist. Muir says that today “Artists are born, like it or not, into the market. It’s impossible to escape; it envelops them. It’s up to them how they resist it – if they resist it.” Hutchison’s project is a resistance of sorts, parachuting the anti-capitalist sentiments of an Occupy protester into the most elaborate capitalist ritual of them all – the art fair.

About the artist

Jeremy Hutchison (born 1979) is a British artist based in New York. Having studied linguistics and written commercials for multinational corporations, in 2011 he graduated from the Slade School of Fine Art. His work has been exhibited at ICA, Modern Art Oxford and Saatchi New Sensations.

Jon Sharples

Co-Chair, Simmons & Simmons Art Network

You Are Loved has a romantic, imprecise, wistful quality reminiscent of the ‘slogan art’ of Bob and Roberta Smith, specifying neither who ‘you’ is, or who is doing the loving. The visible work is undermined by the full title, written in pen on the rear of the piece – YOU ARE LOVED (FOR YOUR MONEY). The Occupy protester has chosen a surprisingly muted palette – the cobalt blue on a white background has stronger associations with delicate Ming porcelain than angry protest – but the thick white gesso ground and spray-painted scrawl gives the impression of a panel of graffiti cut from a roughly plastered wall.

Hutchison says that he “constructs situations that disrupt the flow of global capital through industrial production and consumer ideology”. Working across media, He creates uncanny and thought-provoking situations that subtly distort the commercial process. Recent projects have seen him commission professional hand models and a commercial photographer to create glossy shoots with the expected consumer products replaced by mud sculptures, as well as inviting factory workers to insert a deliberate mistake into their products to subvert their ordinary function.



Is that a crack in the crockery?

2011-2014

140 cm x 120 cm

Oil on canvas

Acquired February 2015

Nicholas John Jones

Nicholas John Jones is a painter of some emotion, who pays detailed attention to the materiality and process of the progression of the painting. Traditionally in painting, the image's capacity to represent was the foremost conduit for emotion. The American Action painters, such as Jackson Pollock and Franz Kline, established the view that painting is an arena with which to come to terms with the art of creation. With Jones, as a Post-Action painter, it is the artist's struggle to come to terms with the medium of painting as an arena of creation that is the focus of the emotion. In this painting, created over a three-year period, the allusion to drapery or a prior pattern is almost a half-way house between thought and expression. The ethereal quality of the painting suggests disillusionment with concrete expression. It is interesting to consider what influence his residencies in China and Japan may have had on this style that employs hard lines to achieve something between solidity and abstraction, given their long traditions of stylised, imagined landscapes and drapery in ink painting.

Jones considers that the titles of his paintings are integral to the work; subtle suggestions of open questions which are not intended for resolution – like the paintings, things in themselves that open connections without confirming them, injecting instead a dash of wonder.

About the artist

Nicholas John Jones (born in 1982) lives and works in London. He studied at Chelsea College of Arts and Design and the Wimbledon School of Art and graduated (MFA) from the Slade School of Art in 2011. He was artist in residence at the Sunhe Museum, Hangzhou, China (2012) and at GURA, Kyoto, Japan (2012).

Netanya Jackson
Trainee, Intellectual Property

Is that a crack in the crockery? is an allusion to a deeper question of whether there is a 'crack' or problem with painting now, as well as a reference to the painting's many spaces between lines, thin coloured edges or 'cracks'.

Jones relates how a thin colour wash 'called out' for swathes of blue and orange injected into patches of directional brush strokes. The subtle mix of translucent pastel colours is reminiscent of the late work of Richard Diebenkorn, or the early backgrounds of Henri Matisse. Neutral greys and creams, assisted by contrasting darks, subdue the colour, allowing it only the slightest of glimpses out around their edges. The dynamic central swirl reinstates colour, simultaneously dragging darks rapidly from above, and suppressing the colour to the depths. The piece remains in deadlock between this colour and the darker insertions.

Connecting back to a Post-Actionist allegiance, Jones is juxtaposing form with chaos, and asking the viewer to determine whether this amounts to creation. The reason I find this painting moving is that it is akin to watching a film that finishes one scene too early. We are brought so far along a conceptual journey with Jones, and then left to figure out the final step.



Black tulip, squares

2012

55.9 cm x 71.1 cm

Fluorescent plastic

Acquired April 2015

Ian Kiaer

In 1915 Kazimir Malevich painted his famous *Black Square*, the subject of recent exhibitions at *Tate Modern* and the *Whitechapel Gallery*, and declared the end of representational art that would be usurped by the 'supreme' art of abstract forms and colours. A hundred years on, discussions around the death of representation and the death of painting itself have not abated, and so the black tulip of the title of Ian Kiaer's work *Black tulip, squares*, seems appropriately funereal. It is in fact an allusion to a story by Alexandre Dumas, which tells of a competition to breed a black tulip; like art, an artificial, yet perfect creation. The competition is fierce; the irrational desire that circulates around the tulip so contrary to notions of stable value or of an organic ecology.

Kiaer's is a practice that regards painting in all its complexity and irrational desires, and in this work we can see a playful rendering of the coloured rectangle that is a singular mark of

painting. Here are the squares of Suprematism, a movement and period of painting of interest to Kiaer; there just isn't any paint. His hi-vis material is found and industrial, rather than the stuff of the fine art supplier, the consequences of which for the prestige of the work are unclear.

Prestige in art is a funny thing. Malevich's *Black Square* moment was supposed to be a tabula rasa – a revolution of geometric abstraction that was not just a style but a model or blueprint for a new egalitarian and harmonious society. This was art for the people, its aim to embody a metaphysical dimension that would eventually usher in a revitalised utopian society based on spiritual values. It is one of art history's great ironies that this abstract art has come to be regarded as the most elitist and least accessible of all visual arts. Kiaer's lightweight, humble, ephemeral work occupies an interesting no-man's land in this most contested of fields.

About the artist

Ian Kiaer (born 1971) studied at the Slade School of Art (1995) and the Royal College of Art MA (2000); PhD (2008). His recent solo exhibitions include Henry Moore Institute, Aspen Art Museum, Kunstverein Munich, Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin and group shows at the Hammer Museum, Hayward Gallery, Tate Modern, 10th Lyon Biennale, 4th Berlin Biennial, and the 50th Venice Biennale. Kiaer lives and works in London.

Jon Sharples

Co-Chair, Simmons & Simmons Art Network



Who invented the hole part 1: Henry Moore

2014

150 x 130 cm

Oil on canvas

Acquired August 2014

Mackie

Who invented the hole part 1: Henry Moore is based on an alleged argument between Moore (1898–1986) and Barbara Hepworth (1903 – 1975) over who invented the ‘hole’ in sculpture. In Mackie’s painting, the sculpture inside the house is Moore’s *Oval with Points* (1968–1970). It is an interesting use of this particular sculpture to show his point as it looks like two separate holes, delicately joined but still very separate, as indeed Moore and Hepworth allegedly were in their opinions of who invented the hole. This is the first of a group of paintings depicting the artist’s tribute to the argument.

This painting is part of Mackie’s ‘Abandoned Dollhouse’ series, where the centre piece of the composition is an architectural structure which has had a section removed so the viewer can see inside, in the same way a child’s dollhouse would be visible. In this series the artist shows quite clearly different seasons. This picture is showing autumn/winter. As a final play on words, it is worth noting that being part of the ‘Abandoned Dollhouse’ series, there has to be a ‘hole’ for the viewer to be able to see the sculpture.

One of the goals of Mackie’s work is to promote expansive thought and to offer questions, but not necessarily the

answers. He says, “I spend a long time balancing a painting to make it attractive enough to intrigue the viewer. My hope is that they may investigate the painting, noticing the subtleties. Maybe leave with a few questions.”

At first glance the picture looks like a well executed landscape, until you notice the building and the sculpture within. That is when the questions start – what is a sculpture doing in the picture? Why is it in a barn? Is it just a random sculpture or does it have relevance?

After the initial feeling of familiarity I gained from the beautifully depicted weather pattern, and the sense of security that here was an element of the picture that I knew, I was drawn to the colourful interior walls of the building, providing a surreal contrast to the grey weather outside. This naturally draws the eye then to the sculpture, and I like the way the artist has treated its surface texture. It is a grey day, but reflective areas create the unmistakable sense of gently polished bronze. I like that the building is slightly run down and this is carried on around the building by things lying on their side and upturned fence posts, the kind of vista you would see if you travelled in the country.

About the artist

Andrew McIntosh (Mackie) (born 1979) is originally from the Highlands of Scotland and now lives and works in London. He was educated in illustration and design at Edinburgh’s Telford College 1997-99. His early career was as a landscape painter. In 2014 he was a finalist in the John Moores Painting Prize and won the Towry Award for best in show at the National Open Art Competition.

Chris Lewis

Co-Chair, Simmons & Simmons Art Network



Air Conditioning/a closed feeling

2014

70 cm x 54.1 cm

Oil on wood panel

Acquired February 2015

Wendy McLean

This painting is one of a group of works based around a repeated shape. Taking a staircase as her starting point, Wendy McLean dissects its moving and relating geometries. Exploring the architecture of the stairs through quick, notational, sometimes 'incorrect' drawing, she passes lightly and deftly through different possibilities. Some of these possibilities gain solidarity, some are repeated and proliferated, offering a way to think about how a drawn line could carry a larger, unseen knowledge or significance. The impression left is of a series of angles. Some form points, or even arrows; others hold other spaces in position. Some hold denser colours in place. Yellow exerts itself here as the most obvious colour, yet it is thin and is sometimes tinted by other colours akin to the sepia tones of old photographs containing fragments of memory in a way that recalls Luc Tuymans' painting,

Air Conditioning/a closed feeling is the title of a piece of music by the band Rachel's, which has a distinct shift in

tone – moving from an oppressive, indoor atmosphere, to the light, airy outdoors punctuated with birdsong.

When I first looked at this piece I was confused by the picture and title. However, the more I looked at it and the more I thought about it, I could start to marry up the title to what I saw. I see a picture of two distinct areas, the left and the right hand sides, perhaps showing the closed feeling to the viewer. On the left there is less colour and individual shapes whilst on the right there is far more colour and the picture is busier altogether. I perceive the thin black line off centre to be a barrier between the two sides, which whilst it can be pierced cannot be fully crossed as shown by only a small portion of the arrow head being able to make it across. Therefore the left is 'closed' to the right.

By our very use of air conditioning we are closed to experiencing the true environment. How many times do we sit in our air-conditioned offices and homes and look out of the window and feel closed off from the world outside?

About the artist

Wendy McLean lives and works in London. She studied at the Cass School, London Metropolitan University, and recently graduated MA from the Royal College of Art. Recent group exhibitions in London include those at Mayor's Parlour Gallery, Winter Projects, Bermondsey Project, Lion and Lamb and Idea Store. She is also a teaching fellow at the University of Reading. She won the London Metropolitan University Owen Rowley Prize in 2008 and the Gilchrist Fisher painting prize in 2010 and was awarded the Neville Burston Award at the Royal College of Art in 2011.

Chris Lewis

Co-Chair, Simmons & Simmons Art Network



Demo 2

2014

65 cm x 55 cm

Acrylic and aluminium powder on linen

Acquired February 2015

Andrea Medjesi-Jones

In this series originating from a residency in Rome, Andrea Medjesi-Jones explores a model of painterly language defined by specific material processes that appear in the work as marks, gestures, and textures. She has described the work as a response to the complex archaeological and social layers of contemporary Rome in which the past is ever-present and contradictions pile up on contradictions – ancient and modern, sacred and profane, magical and mundane.

Rollers, masking tape, and cut-outs serve to elide painterly seductiveness by adopting banal and repetitive ways of mark-making. The marks are applied through plastic sheeting or with the use of paint rollers that are further scraped and washed out to display the residue of material traces in place of the image itself. The work is reduced to monochromatic schemes of aluminium powder and black

pigments, economising the use of form and replicating the pre-existing variables and systems of image production towards less representational painterly vocabulary.

This work looks to move away from a traditional sense of painting, instead using a more mechanical approach to the process, informed by the production value of the image. My first impression of this work was that it does not remind me of a conventional painting at all. It resembles an old black and white picture that has been pieced back together after a fire, with its sooty residue having been carelessly brushed away. The aluminium emerging from the dirt also speaks to an industrialised present competing with an ancient past.

The mood is one of hope and longing following ruin and destruction.

About the artist

Andrea Medjesi-Jones (born 1973) lives and works in London. She studied both BA and MA at Goldsmiths' College, and PhD from Cambridge School of Art, Anglia Ruskin University. She was awarded the Abbey Scholarship at the British School at Rome and has recently exhibited at Laurent Delaye in London and in group exhibitions in the Bloomberg New Contemporaries, at Bäckerstrasse4, Vienna, Jerwood Contemporary Painters, and the John Moores Painting Prize at the Walker Art Gallery.

Michael O'Donoghue

Associate, Financial Markets Litigation



Bomb weed

2014

120 cm x 160 cm

Watercolour screen print on bleach treated canvas

Acquired February 2015

Aimée Parrott

This work employs a silk screen technique to produce a single piece rather than the usual multiple, uniform output that Andy Warhol made famous. Aimée Parrott uses process and material at odds with one another and in a way contrary to their traditional applications. Watercolour is traditionally a discreet and delicate medium, used mostly on a small scale; it also has the directness of a drawing. The transfer of the watercolour pigment from screen to canvas creates a disjunction between the original gesture and the surface on which it comes to sit. As Parrott explains, “the simplicity of this technique lends the work a physical ambivalence between original and reproduction, between painting and sculpture.”

Using bleach to break the consistency of the surface and disrupting the natural pigment of the canvas, Parrott creates an uneven backdrop for the printing and maximises the luminosity of watercolour. The directness and the speed of the gestural mark is disrupted by the hallmarks of printing as well as by the way the pigments separate and pool as they dry on the surface of the polyester screen. A hair dryer is used to move the pigment around the screen and direct the drying, undermining the linear marks and

interrupting the flatness of shapes. The result recalls the work of Colour Field painting pioneer Helen Frankenthaler.

At first glance, the apparent lack of any definitive form or shape in Parrott’s work could be mistaken for a chaotic and arbitrary display of watercolours. This is what initially caught my attention and made me want to engage with the painting to understand the work, the method and the artist.

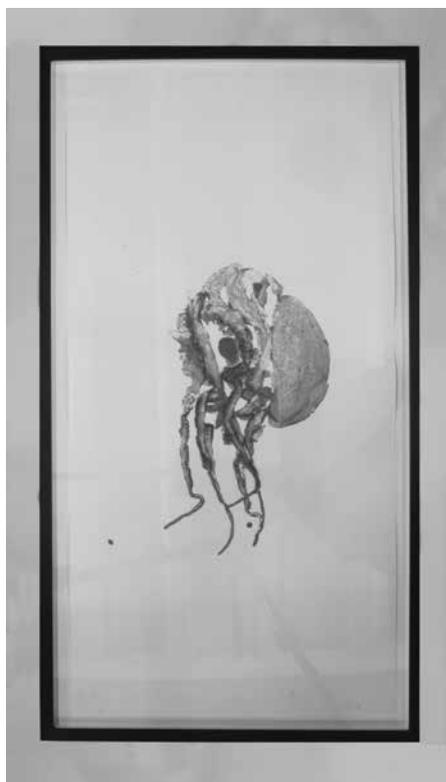
It is the simple but bold use of layering with recurring colour which allows the work to unravel and creates a sensory flow that draws you in. As your eyes follow the flow of the painting, the layers create a sense of displacement as one colour overpowers or succumbs to the depth of another allowing you to escape, however briefly, from the concern of the artist’s true intention, enabling you to fall into an unaffected and natural state of tranquillity.

I immediately fell in love with this painting and found myself intrigued enough to return time and again to the reassuring familiarity of the colours and the layers that lured me in the first time round.

About the artist

Aimée Parrott (born 1987) graduated from the University College Falmouth with a BA Fine Art First Class in 2009. She recently graduated from the Royal Academy Schools, and has exhibited in group exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Arts and TinType Gallery in London. She has recently exhibited in a joint exhibition with Helen Frankenthaler at London’s Pippy Houldsworth Gallery.

Michael O’Donoghue
Associate, Financial Markets Litigation



Octopus Drawings

2011

84 x 44 cm (x3)

Octopus ink on blotting paper

Acquired January 2015

Douglas White

The *Octopus Drawings* appear floaty and ethereal. There's a comforting freedom of their forms, which appear to be supported by water and organic in shape. The release from structure and curation imports a sense of fluid ease: that what we are seeing is natural and free. The sensation is recorded, encyclopaedia-like, in the neutered tones of scientific illustration.

But these are not illustrations, and nor are they peaceful. True to a theme prevalent across Douglas White's work, the drawings are the outcome of a process of transformation. As White explained to us, the *Octopus Drawings* are made directly by printing an octopus in its own ink. The ink is removed and placed in a bowl into which the

octopus is dipped, before being pressed onto blotting paper over and over again until the images are formed.

It's an intriguingly literal piece, creating a permanency out of something fleeting. White notes "there's clearly a relationship with death – in that [the drawings] are the prints of a lifeless body, but the process cannot help but give a certain life, as well as lasting record, which has a certain beauty in itself".

Perhaps it's this beauty that makes the pieces feel more real than they should, more alive, electric. The process, heavy and macabre, in fact transforms the sinister into the peaceful, and back again. This sense of transformation creates a motion that almost casts the viewer aside, left to reconcile feelings of loss whilst confronted with a light, dizzying image of enchanted permanence.

About the artist

Douglas White is a London-based artist, born in Guildford in 1977. He studied at the Ruskin School of Art, the fine art department of the University of Oxford, between 1997 and 2002. He subsequently undertook an MA in sculpture at the Royal College of Art, graduating in 2005.

Paul Metcalfe
Associate, Financial Services



Lichtenberg Drawing II

2014

255 x 55 cm

10,000 volts on valchromat

Acquired January 2015

Douglas White

Douglas White's work has seen itself reinvented through many artistic media. Having started out as a draughtsman and painter, White now works in sculpture, found objects and, more recently, film. His changing use of media reflects a desire to work beyond a canvas, to contort and load pieces with a deeper sense of process.

The *Lichtenberg Drawings* are perhaps something of a culmination of this transition: a blurring of the lines to produce pieces that whilst neither drawings, paintings nor sculptures, manage somehow to be simultaneously all three.

The pieces are nominally and literally “Lichtenberg figures”, particular forms generated by the discharge of electricity fracturing into an insulating base – in nature, the effect can be seen at the site of a lightning strike. Indeed the series began after White saw an image

of a man who had been struck by lightning, his back displaying capillaries ruptured into a Lichtenberg figure.

Channelling this brutal process onto wood produces a remarkable effect: delicate feathers of branching leaves fan out from scarred, fragile ravines. Blends of charcoal and gold layer into one another exquisitely, like a Chinese *shan shui* landscape lost on its way back from the Song dynasty. There's the poise of fine drawing, with a sculptural texture, all of which is shrouded in a destructive overtone.

Violence unravels itself further as the process becomes more understood: White uses a neon sign transformer to initiate the discharge of 10,000 volts into its base, setting the parameters of the burning, but then giving up control. The piece is left to complete its own creation by controlled destruction – a smooth two dimensional canvas becomes a scarred and textured hung installation – a thing of brutal beauty.

About the artist

Douglas White is a London based-artist, born in Guildford in 1977. He studied at the Ruskin School of Art, the fine art department of the University of Oxford, between 1997 and 2002. He subsequently undertook an MA in sculpture at the Royal College of Art, graduating in 2005.

Paul Metcalfe
Associate, Financial Services

The Simmons & Simmons Art Network

Different studies have placed the average time people spend looking at individual art works in galleries and museums at anywhere from 17 seconds to as little as 3 seconds.

Looking at art in the corporate environment is a bit different. A work can resonate in a new way after 2 or 3 hours shut in a meeting room with it. A piece's meaning can evolve for someone who passes it in a corridor every day for months or even years. Love it or hate it, spending that much time in front of an artwork means there will often be dialogue with it. It can make us listen to it, and think something in response, and look again; it's an intriguing phenomenon to have an ongoing, evolving relationship with something that is itself unchanging.

That said, artwork hung in any living environment, be it domestic or working, can become wallpaper and simply fade into the background. This can even happen when the work is by Tracey Emin, or Chris Ofili, or Jake and Dinos Chapman, and so in 2012 the Art Network was born to raise the profile of the firm's collection of contemporary art and to provide more opportunities for partners and staff to engage both with it and the wider contemporary art world.

Since then, the Art Network has gone from strength to strength to the point where we now have over 150 members receiving regular updates of activities around the collection, such as new acquisitions, re-hangs and exhibitions, as well as invitations to tours and events both within and outside the firm, and information about *pro bono* opportunities within the visual arts such as the 'Lawyers Volunteering for the Arts' and 'Law for the Arts' programmes.

Last year we achieved several notable 'firsts', including the first staff-curated exhibition "Are you sitting comfortably?" and the first selling-show by an external gallerist for partners and staff. Recently, we had our first offsite excursion – a tour behind the scenes of the Government Art Collection – and several more visits to galleries and artists' studios are in the pipeline. Network members are writing about the collection in greater numbers than ever before, both for exhibition catalogues and for 'art cards' to be displayed alongside the works throughout our offices, many of which contain touching, personal responses to those works.

Our 'private' art collection is more accessible than ever due to the dedication, enthusiasm and knowledge of members of the Art Network who have trained to become tour guides. In the last couple of years we have greatly increased the number of tours given to groups from outside the firm, including popular client entertaining events, sold-out allocations for Open House London and the City of London Festival, and lots of groups from art institutions and colleges. Our friends outside of the firm can read about these events and all our other activities by visiting our dedicated art website, by following us on Twitter, or by signing up to our external mailing list – all of which are maintained by members of the Network.

Jon Sharples and Chris Lewis

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