

Dirty Synth II

Tony Benn, Chris Cook, Louise Chambers, Claire Dorsett,
Richard Dyer, Zavier Ellis, Peter Lynch, Christine Stark,
Michael Stubbs, Mark Wright, Raymond Yap

Curated by Tony Benn

Exhibition: Friday 25 August - Friday 6 October 2023

The Bear

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Enquires

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THE BEAR PRESENTS

DIRTY SYNTH II

CURATOR TONY BENN

ORGANISED BY PETER LYNCH

296A CAMBERWELL NEW ROAD

SE5 0RP

Tony Benn, Chris Cook,
Louisa Chambers, Claire Dorsett,
Richard Dyer, Xavier Ellis,
Peter Lynch, Christine Stark,
Michael Stubbs, Mark Wright,
Raymond Yap

Opening event 24/08/23 7-9 pm.

Closing event 1/10/23 7-9 pm.

Exhibition 25/08/23 - 6/10/23

Open Wed - Sunday 4-11pm

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DIRTY SYNTH

Dirty synth is a show that brings together a diverse range of artists all working in painting and all investigating the exciting possibilities for abstract painting to engage with its audience. The use of the haptic (touch) and materiality of painting (how the painting is touched) makes a direct connection to the viewer. The title arose from a conversation with Zavier Ellis around the claims for purity of Modernist abstract painting, a claim that both of us found implausible. In its full version, Dirty Synthetic. The shortening of the word was to create poetic compaction and create an uncertainty about whether it is the synthetic or the synthesis that is being evoked. If it was the synthesis then that position of synthesising opposing positions, dialectics, would quickly be apparent as implausible with the paintings chosen. The synthetic however, does provoke mild feelings of disgust: synthetic material, polycotton shirts, inauthentic colours. Dirt as we all know is simply matter in the wrong place. If we are living in dystopic times, which I believe we are, this show is a testament to the belief that painting can affirm the times we are living in socially and mortally.



Installation view
Artworks by Mark Wright, Zavier Ellis, Michael Stubbs, Mark Wright
(Left to right)



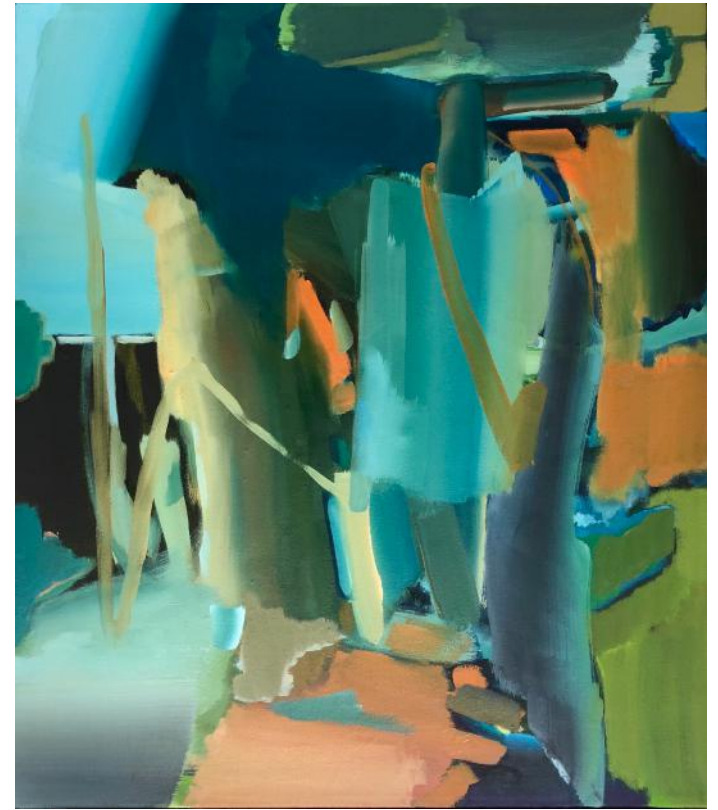
Installation view
Artworks by Tony Benn, Peter Lynch
(Left to right)



Mark Wright
Twilight 1, 2022
Oil and acrylic on paper
76 x 56 cm



Mark Wright
Twilight 2, 2022
oil and acrylic on paper
76 x 56 cm



Mark Wright
Portal, 2021
Oil and acrylic on canvas
76 x 58cm

Mark Wright

Operating between abstraction and figuration the paintings create a window onto the outside world that can be interpreted as 'fragments' of landscape or organic forms. The works are created through painterly processes, so that the materiality can embody temporal and spatial elements. In his most brilliant summary of what it means to be an artist, de Kooning said, *You know, the real world, this so-called world, is just something you put up with like everybody else. I'm in my element when I'm a little bit out of this world: then I'm in the real world – I'm on the beam. Because when I'm falling, I'm doing alright. When I'm slipping, I say, 'Hey, this is interesting.' It's when I'm standing upright that bothers me... As a matter of fact, I'm really slipping most of the time. I'm like a slipping glimpser.*



Zavier Ellis
Liberté (Repeat), 2023
Acrylic, emulsion, ink, wax crayon, pencil, collage,
tape on birch ply
30 x 24 cm



Zavier Ellis
Revolt Repeat_Zero, 2020
Oil, oil bar, acrylic, spray paint, collage
on canvas
30.5 x 25.5 cm

Zavier Ellis

The paintings are a palimpsest of glimpsed words and imagery just barely rescued from the rubbish bin of Modernism. They appear to have suffered severe degradation or great battles. Often images of large demonstrations emerge and repeat and overlap and fade away. History is ever present in the work as a troubling and troubled presence. It is there both as representations that have worn out or in the facture and materiality of the work.



Michael Stubbs
Self Portrait #4, 2012
Spray paint and neon paper on paper
60 x 42 cm (unframed)



Michael Stubbs
Self Portrait #6, 2012
Spray paint and neon paper on paper
60 x 42 cm (unframed)

Michael Stubbs uses a process of visual layering within his paintings by placing fragments of one image on top of another, recognising how painting as a language is an unstable and frequently growing palimpsest of past positions. Stubbs builds his paintings through a dynamic coming together of bold slabs of household paint, and softer stains and pools of tinted floor varnish. He carefully orchestrates this painterly vocabulary to hint at, and interconnect with, both art historical precedents and the ever-present and encroaching digital and photographic vocabularies.

Daniel Sturgis, 'High on Hope' Exhibition Catalogue, Cross Lane Projects, Kendal, UK, 2022



Tony Benn
Decoy, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm



Tony Benn
Angelfrankie, 2022
Acrylic on canvas
50 x 50 cm



Tony Benn
Thewayitis, 2022
Acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 cm

Tony Benn has been using found imagery since the 80's. The latest manifestation of this are paintings that combine familiar material which is usually seen as decorative within High Modernism criticism. The material is pub carpets and flock (18/19th century) wallpaper. It is a car crash between high culture of aristocratic homes and low culture of pubs that sell cheap alcohol despite each carpet being individually designed and manufactured by the best carpet maker in UK. The material nature of the paintings is of paramount importance to the concerns with the haptic and touch space of painting.



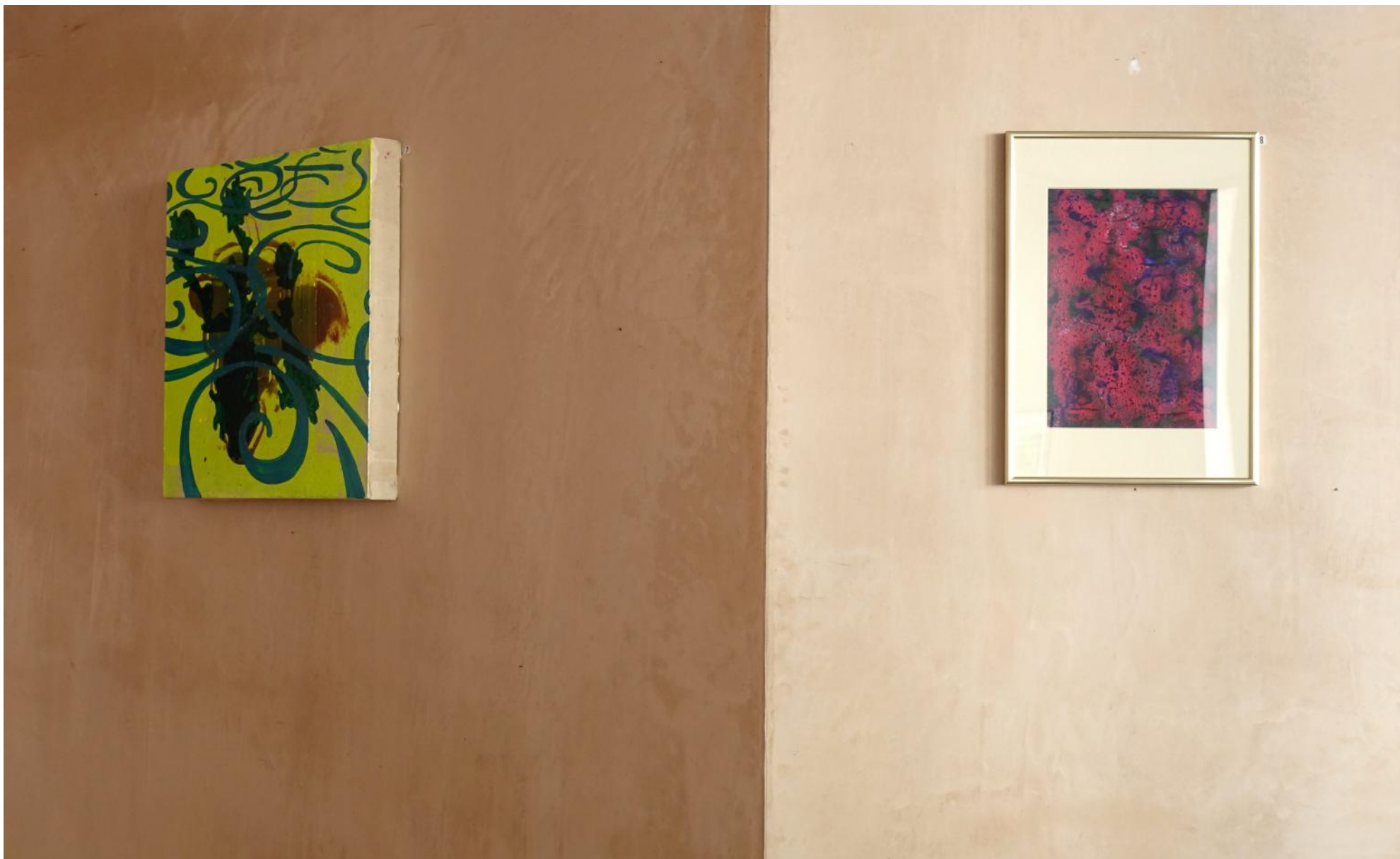
Peter Lynch
ellen V 14.01.23,[2023], revised, 2023
Archive ink on paper, unique print
119 x 89 cm
signed on reverse
PLPR.23.001 / PLW.23.005



Peter Lynch
aya IV [2020]
Acrylic on canvas
22.5 x 30.5 x 2 cm
signed on reverse
PLP20.005

Peter Lynch

The new works are a continues exploration of gesture/non gesture within the language of painting. Paint applied with brush or roller creating a monochrome, the finger mark corrupting the surface. Each subsequent layer tries to erase the previous, but the painting history can never be fully eradicated, an echo of the substrate is always subtly evident upon the surface. The finished paintings reach an understanding, a balance or unbalance between gesture and no gesture, between expression and the mechanical, the result of which is a labyrinth of surface upon the canvas.



Installation view
Artworks by Tony Benn, Raymond Yap
(Left to right)



Installation view
Artworks by Mark Wright, Claire Dorsett
(Left to right)



Raymond Yap
Untitled, 2023
Acrylic on paper
30 x 21 cm

Raymond Yap

He has been making paintings since his Royal Academy days where he uses of natural or cultural form that morphs into a piece of design. This would seem to be at odds with the purity claim for Modernism. If you have seen the Far East visual culture of Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand where one is bombarded by high octane colour and temples of glorious design these paintings are at one with his culture where he now lives.



Claire Dorsett
Sponge and Scourer, 2020
Acrylic on canvas
30 x 30 cm

Claire Dorsett

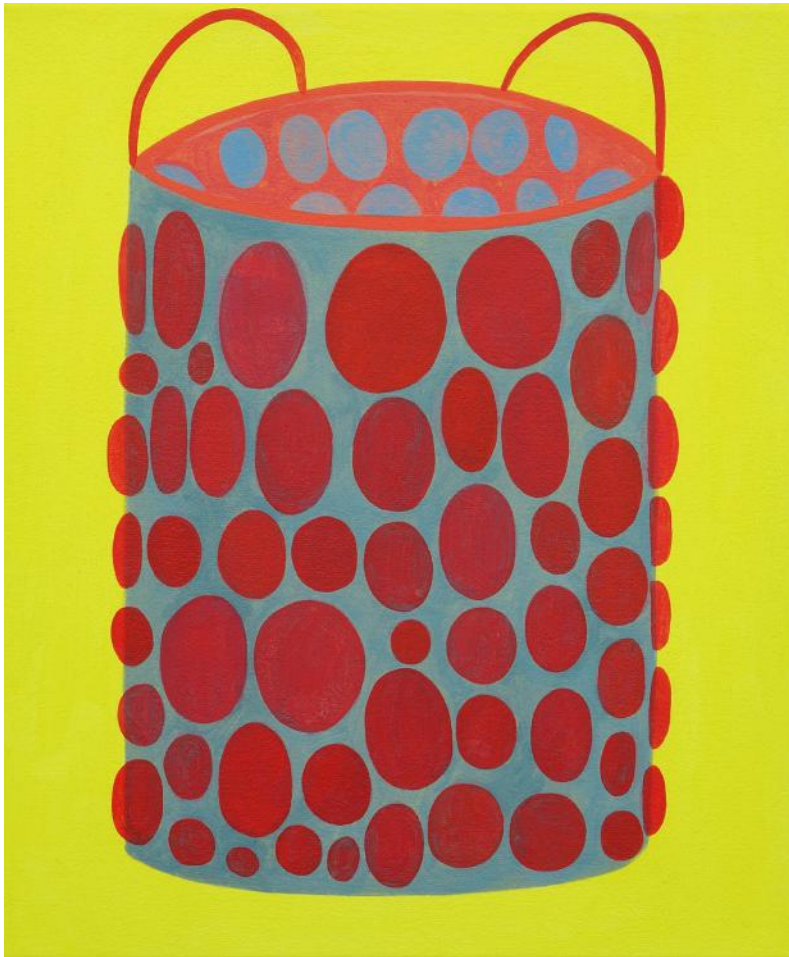
Taking the everyday seriously. She remarks upon what most people would ignore as banal or trivial and builds it through painting to have great symbolic significance. The drawing is straightforward and linear but made bolder and graphic as if done with magic marker. There are no hiding places in the paintings as they are all one-time marks and colours. They are personal but of experiences we know or have had.



Installation view
Artworks by Peter Lynch, Tony Benn, Louisa Chambers
(Left to right)



Installation view
Artworks by Chris Cook, Christine Stark, Richard Dyer
(Left to right)



Louisa Chambers
Wearable Grater (with pink stones), 2023
Acrylic on canvas
30 x 25 cm



Louisa Chambers
Rock House, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
30 x 25 cm

Louisa Chambers

Imagined objects, repeated patterned motifs, architectural structures, hats and proposals for wearable / non-functional clothing all feature in this new series of paintings and drawings by Louisa Chambers. Applying a playful approach when constructing images, sources derive from memories of buildings, patterns and 'things' encountered on daily walks made locally or further afield. Shapes and constructions begin from a fixed vantage point, a frontal view growing into anthropomorphic beings. These depicted forms make references to personal narratives about subjects responding to the everyday, boredom, routine and domestic life that acknowledges a humorous and idiosyncratic vision.



Chris Cook
Pink-Blue, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
25 x 20 cm



Chris Cook
Pink-Emerald, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
25 x 20 cm

Chris Cook

There is an apparent austerity about her work using consistent motif, design, composition; choose one you feel comfortable with. But underlying the use of repetition, which after all is one of Modernisms biggest claims to purity, there is a playfulness undercutting such seriousness. The use of doubles, not unlike Rauschenberg's Factotum paintings, leads to a chiasmus of the undecidable.



Christine Stark

Untitled, 2020 and 2022

Found card, spray paint, acrylic & household paint, watercolour paper on card, wood block
dimensions variable (approximately from 10 x 4 cm to 17 x 12 cm)

Christine Stark

These slight shards of intense colour seem to cut through one's retina like shards of coloured glass from a shattered kaleidoscope. They almost topple off the wall like one of Cezanne's apples might fall off the table. The informal, the handmade collage has a long legacy in the history of art where touch and fabrication, facture, comes to foreground of consciousness, affirming the fragility and resilience of our lives.



Richard Dyer

Tintoretto Tango, 2010 (left)

Touché Boucher!, 2010 (middle)

Paynes Grey Grisalle (right)

Watercolour on T H Saunders paper

21 x 26 cm (each)

Richard Dyer

As T. J. Clark might put it, 'the serious problem of picture making' comes to the foreground in Dyer's work. This is where the tropes of description and shaping are investigated but playfully so. What drives Dyer's paintings forward is not the discarding of references to the world. It is that depiction is being driven towards a more qualified and stranger depiction of things, to a different order of thingness. A thing that is a thing and not a thing.



PV evening



PV evening

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