

Hayley Tompkins – LB.

9 April – 23 May 2019

Drawing room is very pleased to present Hayley Tompkins's second solo exhibition, after *Technicolour Hamburger* (2015). The artist (*1971 in Leighton Buzzard) currently lives and works in Glasgow. In 2013 she was one of the artists shown in the Scottish pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale. Now, in her Drawing Room exhibition entitled *LB.*, she is combining new Digital Light Pools with a new series of small-format acrylic paintings on paper and sculptural objects. In her painterly explorations, Tompkins applies her unique and intense colour treatment and unorthodox form of presentation to these objects to investigate what painting can be today.

Hayley Tompkins is a sleuth, using painting to investigate the world and its objects, and to make them comprehensible to herself and others. In her artistic practice, Tompkins subjects the most diverse objects from her own life and her surroundings to an in-depth chromatic exploration. These could be such disparate objects as hammers, spoons, containers made of plastic or metal, buckets, a mobile telephone, found twigs, textiles, digital photos from Internet databases, or simple wooden frames. For her intimate "notations" or diary-like installations, she combines these together and covers their surfaces with brush strokes, poured colour or colourful scraps of fabric, in order to bestow a new, second skin and form on them. The objects she touches with her painterly magic wand change from purely functional or technological everyday objects into meta-objects – unearthly, atmospheric and voluptuously charged components of her poetic orchestrations of colour space – and yet they never renounce their sculptural character or the everyday contexts from which they arise.



Tompkins assembles objects into "painting tableaux", but also simultaneously deconstructs them, always driven by the question of how far she can go: "When I wrap patterned fabric around a stretcher frame, slit it open so the painted wood shows through, and paste an overpainted photo in the middle – then will that still be perceived as a painting?" (see ill. *Untitled*, 2019)

The *Upgrade-Pieces* series, begun in 2018 for her solo exhibition at Bonner Kunstverein, deals with such basic questions.

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With her new work from the *Digital Light Pools* series (see ill. *Digital Light Pool III*, 2019), Tompkins further explores the tasks and scope of her medium. As early as 2013/14 Tompkins relinquished the brush stroke, pouring water-colour-thin acrylic into see-through plastic trays and swishing it back and forth as if panning for gold (see her contribution to the Venice Biennial and her solo exhibition in the Aspen Art Museum). This produced arrangements of colour gradients and flowing forms, which the artist has described as small television screens and “*events of colour in a space*”. Relinquishing the painter’s most important tool, the brush, Tompkins consciously negated the painterly ductus in these works.



However, the painterly handling is once again very obvious and the brush work clearly recognisable in the four *Digital Light Pools* created in 2019 for this exhibition. The direct gestural ductus and richness of detail in these works calls to mind forerunners from the grand tradition of abstract painting such as Asger Jorn, Antoni Tàpies or Helen Frankenthaler. Nevertheless, in their own small space they develop very unique moods and ‘temperatures’. They provoke feeling as would, for example, memories of natural phenomena such as rain, wet farmland, mountain landscapes, rock formations, sunken islands, or a ray of light breaking through a bank of cloud.

The new series *Surroundings*, consisting of small format, intensely glowing acrylic paintings on paper, is concerned with abstract patterns and surfaces. Yet similarly, these also allow occasional associations with figurative elements such as faces, or with goblins or interior spaces to flicker into existence. The works feature wide, generous brush strokes and a reduced, earthy palette, from which occasional bright yellow or iridescently bright green sections emerge all the more intensely in the overall view.

The stool entitled *LB* is directly linked to the exhibition title and has autobiographical connotations – the initials refer to Leighton Buzzard in England where the artist grew up, and where such stools have a long tradition. As sculpture and as a seating item it does not renounce its original anthropomorphic, Spartan nature, but with its glowingly intense, colourfully daubed iridescent skin, Tompkins has granted it a second existence as a masterpiece of Pointillism, a fresh spring meadow, or a vibrant lighting effect.

Hayley Tompkins describes her artistic drive in this way: “*I am inspired by the mimetic quality of paint – the fact that paint can turn into something. It’s like a renewable energy, I want to make things out of paint that are both otherworldly, yet ordinary at the same time. It is definitely an experiment.*” (Exhibition catalogue *Hayley Tompkins*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado, 2013, p. 3).



BIOGRAPHY:

Hayley Tompkins (*1971 in Leighton Buzzard, England) has had the following international solo exhibitions, among others, in the past few years: The Modern Institute, Glasgow and Bonner Kunstverein (2018); Lulu, Mexico City and Jupiter Artland, Edinburgh (2017); The Modern Institute, Glasgow and Drawing Room, Hamburg (2015); Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Common Guild, Glasgow (2014); The Aspen Art Museum, Colorado and Studio Voltaire, London (2013). Hayley Tompkins, together with Corin Sworn and Duncan Campbell, was one of the three artists selected to represent Scotland in 2013 in the Palazzo Pisani at the 55th Venice Biennale. In 2012 Hayley Tompkins was invited to the São Paulo Art Biennial.

She has participated in group exhibitions at the following institutions, among others: The New Art Gallery, Walsall; 99 Scott, Brooklyn, NYC; Stuart Shave/Modern Art, London (2019); Art Gallery of Uzbekistan, Tashkent (2016); Leeds Art Gallery (2015/16); Tate Britain (2011); Hessel Museum at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2010); The Hugh Lane Museum, Dublin (2009).

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Opening: Friday 5 April 2019, from 6PM to 10PM. The artist will be in attendance.

Dates: 9 April – 23 May 2019 (extended until 27 June 2019)

For further information please e-mail: contact@drawingroom-hamburg.de

Opening hours: Tuesday to Thursday 12PM – 7PM and by appointment

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