

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RACHEL HOWARD: YOU HAVE A NEW MEMORY



1 OCTOBER – 14 NOVEMBER 2021
PRIVATE VIEW: THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021, 4-8PM
SIMON LEE GALLERY, LONDON

Simon Lee Gallery is delighted to present *You Have a New Memory*, Rachel Howard's inaugural exhibition with the gallery in London. The show brings together a new body of work that continues Howard's pursuit of the possibilities of painting through experimentation.

Throughout the past 25 years, Howard has explored and challenged the capacities of paint, creating works that grapple with notions of uncertainty, fragility, beauty, and pain. Revelling in the sheer joy of her chosen material, Howard's intensely physical approach to painting encourages tensions to play out between control and chaos, order and entropy, making and unmaking, beauty and destruction.

In this exhibition Howard returns to colour with zeal, presenting paintings that endeavour to express the instability of life, the absurd, along with fantasies of an unknowable future. A series of new, large canvases includes works such as *You Have a New Memory*, albeit a synthetic one, a reminder of things past, a veiled recollection of the before time. Similarly, the subject of the painting *Laughing Tree*, is not a real tree but a simulacrum of a simulacrum. Synthetic nature is scrolled on the canvas, veils of 'fake' flowers and leaves flow down the surface, dissolving into the distance, atomised into a haze. Sharp lines slice through the spray, prompting the viewer to consider is it weather, is it static or a glitch?

Elsewhere in the exhibition, Howard focusses on the vista, the path to Edge, walked, painted, drawn, photographed, and filmed by the artist for over a decade. These small works are painted sometimes in situ, sometimes from photographs but often from memory, or a memory of a feeling. Some are intensely worked, others swiftly transcribed. For Howard, the repetition of rendering the view acts as a form of security and certainty in an ambiguous world: this place does exist, this is real, the artist is not mad.

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Downstairs, Howard's ongoing series of flower sculptures map her curiosity with what paint can do. Howard presents fake plastic flowers that have been submerged and resubmerged into buckets of acrylic primer, then left to hang upside down to drip dry. The plastic stems and petals become soft curves; their forms manipulated by the force of gravity on the liquid medium. Formed by a blend of artifice and chance, the works are finally dipped in household gloss paint, giving a deceptive appearance of porcelain or bone. The sculptures bring to mind Chinese scholars' rocks, the process has parallels: the stones would be chosen, cut and carved, then left in lakes so water would erode their forms. Not quite nature, not quite art, the rocks become both at once. In Howard's sculptures time is suspended in the curves and surfaces of an evocative object of contemplation. Howard integrates her synthetic floral forms within wooden plinths, choosing to place them not on top of the structure but in a recess underneath the surface, as well as using the floor as the final resting place for the sculptures elsewhere in the gallery.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Rachel Howard

Rachel Howard was born in 1969 in Easington, County Durham, UK and lives and works in the UK. She received her BA from Goldsmiths College, London, UK. In 2008 she received the British Council Award and in 2004 she was shortlisted for the Jerwood Drawing Prize, London. Internationally renowned, Howard's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions and projects, including Paintings of Violence (Why I am Not a mere Christian), MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2018); Repetition is Truth - Via Dolorosa, Newport Street Gallery, London, UK (2018); Rachel Howard, MACRO Testaccio, Rome, Italy (2016); At Sea, Jerwood Gallery, Hastings, UK (2015) and Repetition is Truth - Via Dolorosa, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donna Regina, Naples, Italy (2011). Her work belongs to major private and public collections including Arts Council Collection, London, UK; Imperial War Museum, London, UK; Jerwood Collection, London, UK; The David Roberts Collection, London, UK; Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas, TX; Ackland Art Museum, Chapel Hill, NC; The wareHOUSE, Wieland Collection, Atlanta, GA; Olbricht Collection, Berlin, Germany; Pio Monte Della Misericordia, Naples, Italy and Museum van Loon, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme.

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: @SimonLeeGallery
www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Rachel Howard, *WW*, 2019-2021. Oil on canvas, 61 x 50.8 cm (24 x 20 in.) Courtesy of the artist and Simon Lee Gallery.

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