

Press Release**16 May - 21 July 2018****Private View Tuesday 15 May 6.30-9pm****Norman Hyams*****serious pursuits - loops, sacks and tennis courts***

We are excited to present to the public our second solo exhibition dedicated to the work of British painter Norman Hyams. The exhibition comprises an installation of painted sacks and a cycle of new paintings alongside many small painted objects, models and constructions. As with all of Norman's work and world, discovering more about it is achieved by listening to what he has to say: if you will, his words are our skeleton key.

The main gallery contains a volume of sacks in assorted sizes. The sacks are made of wool, linen and sackcloth, gathered and closed at the open edge with raffia, string, plastic zip ties. Looking closely reveals surfaces that are heavily worked and finely painted. The sacks are filled and so assume weight and mass and slump, as they would in a warehouse, grainstore or other such place we might usually expect to find them storing or carrying goods:

The sacks - or should I say sack - started life as a prototype, an object to understand, familiarise myself with, the sense of weight hanging in space. This was during a period in my life when I was tormented by the issues surrounding meat, how it was produced and presented. I was troubled by these thoughts. Coincidentally I was also hanging out in a nightclub called Fabric which happened to be located in Smithfield meat market. ... coming out of there many times in the early hours of the morning, deep winter... fuelled by the energy of the club, watching the market workman open up their trailers, I would be blasted by the lights and steam produced by extreme temperatures, colour and forms of dead animals and the imagined energy involved in reaching that end point. I became obsessed with trying to describe the experience with paint, but I could not seem to do it justice, my experience with the medium was limited and so I decided to shelve it for a later date.

After almost ten years hiatus away from the sacks Norman returned to working on them as sculptures and paintings just last year. Aspiring to give these works ever more presence, he enjoyed pushing the sacks around, hanging them from difficult to reach places, working on them as they moved and seeing people's reactions when first encountering them in space. Though the original catalyst for the sacks has

diluted over time they remain a form of magic homage to the artist's blinded by the lights experiences of Smithfield. It is worth noting that the Butcher has meanwhile assumed an iconographic presence in Norman's work, appearing time and again in his paintings as protagonist, onlooker and witness.

Visitors to the show will notice Norman's distinct looping brushstroke skipping light and insistent across silvered surfaces, applied en masse like crochet to cover parts of or full objects or laid down neat and rigid like scales to protect complete surfaces and edges. Norman sees his loops as a kind of sequel to the sacks, operating on the same guiding principle, to produce an absorbing presence:

... can a seemingly random, flippant gesture as the loops hold themselves together in a painting and give the viewer something to engage with. What is becoming clearer to me whilst making the loop paintings is the language developing, this line which can be read in many ways - a way of dividing space, as the shell which forms the presence of something, a beast, an animal, dead or alive, a reminder of what was once there.

Norman's vision for his loop paintings was for them to have pace and urgency. To achieve this goal, many attempts were made to gain confidence. And so Norman evolves his work by constantly adding links to a constant chain of action, pursuit and realisation. That said, the rhythm of the loops is broken by the single painting of an empty tennis court which puts pause on the pace with its scale, tranquility, and straight white markings ordering the field of play:

To some extent the tennis court chose me: I came across an image of a tennis court in a magazine, or a section of a court to be exact, I was immediately struck by the abstract qualities at play in the image, I thought it would be exciting to make my own interpretation. As a child I watched some of the greatest players the world has ever known live at Wimbledon. Extremely thrilling moments shared with my father. The association of the tennis court and my father opened up a train of thought, one that continues on. My father introduced me to so many wonderful things growing up, the tennis, cinema, restaurants, parks, hidden gems of London... My instincts as a painter kicked in when I saw the tennis court image, I could imagine its impact on a large scale, so much lush green space.

And so each work in the exhibition is a certain kind of serious pursuit, and the sum of its parts adds up to the same. What we are offering here, with the artist's consent, is an opportunity to encounter some of the dynamic contradictions of his wide rather than long road: weight - lightness, measure - excess, certainty - doubt, wonder - despair, worry - surety, and so on: welcome!