

CHARLIE SMITH london Ltd.

336 Old Street
London EC1V 9DR
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 7739 4055
direct@charliesmithlondon.com
www.charliesmithlondon.com

Wed-Sat 11am-6pm or by appointment

EMMA BENNETT

And, Afterwards

Private View | First Thursday
Thursday September 6th 6.30-8.30pm

Exhibition Dates
Friday September 7th – Saturday October 6th 2012

Gallery Hours
Wednesday–Saturday 11am–6pm or by appointment

CHARLIE SMITH London is delighted to present Emma Bennett with her second one person show at the gallery.

In this exhibition Bennett continues to explore subjects that have dominated her work for several years, whilst focusing particularly on themes of gravity, time and transience. Still life elements appropriated from historical Dutch and Italian painting are set against monochromatic black grounds to simultaneously recall 17th century still life, Italian Renaissance and 20th century Modernism.

In these paintings we may find any combination of fulsome fruit, expired game, folds of cloth, or consumptive fire, and these images may appear to be either suspended in time and space or are positioned as if on ledges that prevent the objects from any further descent. Bennett deploys these motifs to meditate on the temporality of the finite and to contemplate life, death and the after-life. Her latest work can be seen in relation to the 'irreconcilable concept of presence and absence, life and death' that Yves Klein explored in his Fire Paintings and in his 'Leap into the Void' project.

Indeed, Bennett has recently introduced fire as a personal symbol that aligns itself with the more traditional deployment of fruit, fauna, insects and animals as representative of the transience of corporeality. The characteristics of fire, such as heat, speed, and its upward motion provide a contrast with Bennett's other motionless or downward moving motifs. There is a suggestion of gravity at work here, which to the artist suggests 'a force that exists in opposition to the energy and momentum that propels people and things through life - onwards and (perhaps eventually) upwards'. Gravity is, therefore, a counterbalance to the inherent life-force of all living things, and it is defied by the rebelliously active fire that is historically associated with sky and above space. This juxtaposition of outwardly disjunctive elements continues to retain an internal logic within Bennett's paintings, providing an instinctive, symbolic *mise en place*.

The introduction of fire is a significant development in Bennett's work. Fire is a Heraclitean symbol of change, and as Gaston Bachelard notes in 'Psychoanalysis of Fire', 'suggests the desire to change, to speed up the passage of time, to bring all life to its conclusion, to its hereafter'. In earlier work, Bennett employed her figurative and expressive techniques to portray movement and individual journeys through life. In 'And, Afterwards', even the unruliest of all natural elements appear as though time has stood still.

Bennett is interested in the human desire to make permanent things that will inevitably decay or be transformed over time. As with the work of Hollis Frampton (and in particular his film '(nostalgia)'), Bennett raises questions around the temporality of imagery, memory and the effect that time has on consciousness. Indeed, sometimes her palette suggests the slightly aged quality of the old master reproductions that she regularly works from. By using art historical books as second generational source material and embracing the tonality of colour-plates in preference to actual paintings or reality, we can begin to read this work in light of the tenets of postmodernism as well as neo-classicism, Modernism and even Romanticism. Plurality, appropriation and the combination of mediums are employed to arrive at a subjective meditation on life, loss and the transcendent.

Please contact gallery for images and further information

Biographical:

Born: 1974

Education: 1997 – 1998: MA in Fine Art, Chelsea College of Art and Design; 1993 – 1996: BA (Hons) in Fine Art, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design

Selected Exhibitions: 2012: East Wing X Courtauld Institute, London; 2011: The Saatchi Gallery & Channel 4's New Sensations B1, Victoria House, London and The Future Can Wait (curated by Zavier Ellis, Simon Rumley & Rebecca Wilson); Polemically Small (curated by Edward Lucie-Smith), Klaipėda Culture Communication Centre, Klaipėda; The Future Can Wait presents: Polemically Small, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance (curated by Zavier Ellis, Edward Lucie-Smith, Max Presneill & Simon Rumley); 2010: Death & Co (Solo), CHARLIE SMITH london, London; New British Painting, Gallery Kalhama & Piippo Contemporary, Helsinki; 2009: The Future Can Wait, Old Truman Brewery, London; New London School, Galerie Schuster, Berlin; 2008: The Future Can Wait, Old Truman Brewery, London; 2007: The Future Can Wait, Old Truman Brewery, London; Equinox, Sarah Myerscough Fine Art, London; 2006: Nocturnal, Sarah Myerscough Fine Art, London; John Moores 24 / Liverpool Biennale, Walker Gallery, Liverpool; 2002: Emma Bennett: New Paintings (Solo), Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, London; 2001: A Month in the Garden, The Museum of Garden History, London; 2001: Bittersweet, Danielle Arnaud Contemporary Art, London

Collections: K & K Kollektion, Monaco; David Roberts, London; private collections in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States