



WINTERGREEN BOXWOOD

Sholto Blissett

Sam Creasey

Gianna Dispenza

Sasha Ferré

Hengzhi Gong

Jukka Virkkunen

Xu Yang

Lingrui Zhang

WINTERGREEN BOXWOOD

WINTERGREEN BOXWOOD

SHOLTO BLISSETT

SAM CREASEY

GIANNA DISPENZA

SASHA FERRÉ

HENGZHI GONG

JUKKA VIRKKUNEN

XU YANG

LINGRUI ZHANG

18/09/2020 - 15/11/2020

© All copyright held by the artists concerned

No 20 Arts

20 Cross Street
London N1 2BG
no20arts.com

Cover:

Xu Yang, Detail of **Girl in the Mirror 15012020** (2020), Oil on linen, 95 x 80 cm

Sholto Blissett

Sam Creasey

Gianna Dispenza

Sasha Ferré

Hengzhi Gong

Jukka Virkkunen

Xu Yang

Lingrui Zhang

WINTERGREEN BOXWOOD

No 20 Arts is delighted to present *WINTERGREEN BOXWOOD*, a group exhibition featuring works by **Sholto Blissett, Sam Creasey, Gianna Dispenza, Sasha Ferré, Hengzhi Gong, Jukka Virkkunen, Xu Yang, and Lingrui Zhang**. Taking its name from a plant able to thrive in hostile and difficult conditions, *WINTERGREEN BOXWOOD* gives title to a series of paintings born out of extreme and uncertain environments, recognising the versatility and resourcefulness of artistic creation in our current climate.

Next page:
Sholto Blissett, Detail of **Garden of Hubris III** (2018), Acrylic on canvas, 107 x 132 cm



SHOLTO BLISSETT

Sholto Blissett was born in Salisbury, UK and attended The University of Durham where he read Geography before undertaking an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art. Sholto currently lives and works in London, where he has exhibited with Unit 1 Gallery, White Cube, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, Saatchi Gallery and Fold Gallery.

Growing up in a small village in the south of England surrounded by the ancient sites of Stonehenge and Avebury stone circle, Sholto has always had an interest in the fictions societies create to understand their place in nature. At first glance, Sholto's landscapes evoke the Western division of the human and nonhuman. Yet gradually they turn us towards the Sublime realisation that these two notions are indivisible. Sholto is currently making work as part of the 'Future Archive RCA' project led by photographer Rut Blees Luxemburg.



Sholto Blissett, **Anthropocene II** (2020), Oil on canvas, 110 x 100 cm



SAM CREASEY

Sam Creasey is a contemporary representational painter based in south London. Born in Maidstone, he then lived and worked in Brighton and Hove where he completed a BA at The University of Brighton before moving to London in late 2017. He recently completed his MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art. He has exhibited in both solo and group shows in the UK and is part of a large upcoming group show in Seattle in 2021. He is the recipient of the 2018 Glyndebourne Tour Art Competition.

Sam's paintings welcome the viewer into a dystopian narrative formed from a juxtaposition of lurid photographic material extracted from his research into cities and the urban environment. Spending his employed life as a delivery driver, Sam sees the lives, localities and idiosyncrasies of the metropolitan population like a fly on the wall. The relationship between the mind, body and the harsh municipal materials of concrete, tarmac, steel and glass is central to his practice. Smart technology and algorithms play a large part in Sam's delivery process and exist in many forms that are woven into the city infrastructure. The ramifications and changes these incur on a population form concepts for each of the recent works on display here.

Sam Creasey, **Sales Pitch** (2020), Oil on thick Fabriano paper, 82 x 64 cm

Next page:

Sam Creasey, Detail of **Not In My Back Yard** (2020), Oil on thick Fabriano paper, 82 x 64 cm





GIANNA DISPENZA

Gianna Dispenza takes interest in the archetypes and tropes that thread through art, literature, and our social fabric. In particular, the artist draws our attention to the way in which recurrent symbols and images reverberate differently over time, thereby emphasizing the shifting values of the present.

Her work utilises industrial materials including clay, grout and volcanic ash to experiment with form, tone, and texture. Rarely employing traditional paint, the artist's markedly organic palette is built largely through the inborn colours of materials. Other media are derived from the everyday: the detritus of travel, newspaper clippings and deserted objects. While materiality is central to her practice, feeling is the fundamental constituent of Gianna's work; both the physical push and touch of clay and the intangible intuition which pilots all mark-making.

Gianna Dispenza graduated with a BFA in sculpture from the San Francisco Art Institute (2014), and an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art (2020). Her work has been exhibited internationally, including König London (2020), Charles Moffett Gallery, New York (2020), Bass & Reiner, San Francisco (2020), Galleria Ramo, Italy (2019), The V&A, London (2019), and Les Jardins d'Étretat, France (2019).

Gianna Dispenza, **Sitter II** (2020), Gouache, oil bar, and charcoal on print, 130 x 100 cm



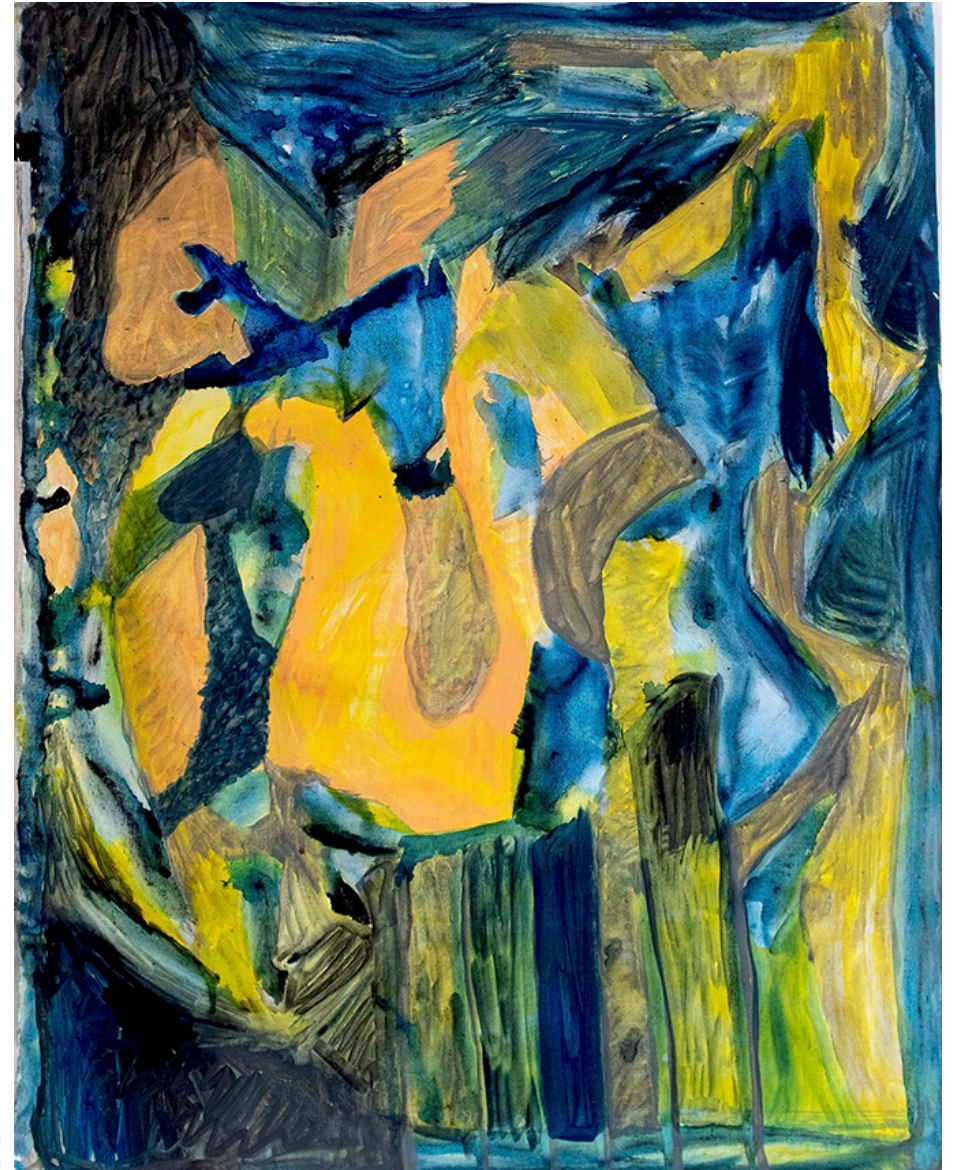
Gianna Dispenza. **Grief** (2020), Clay, terracotta, grout, filler, graphite, PVA, and charcoal on board and frame, 71 x 20.5 cm



Sasha Ferré. **A Memorable Conversation** (2020), Acrylic on linen, 260 x 220 cm

SASHA FERRÉ

Sasha Ferré has exhibited work in the US and Europe, including at the Fred Hutch Research Institute in Seattle and in *Out of Sight*, a survey of contemporary art in the Pacific Northwest. She was featured in *New American Paintings* Pacific Coast edition and has recently exhibited in *Her Space* at the Pillar Hotel and *Final, not Over*, Unit 1 Gallery, both in London. She is the recipient of the Hine Painting Prize 2020. Her recent work directly responds to the global pandemic, a crisis that has fostered an existence where individuals have been encouraged to behave like plants, staying still whilst simultaneously developing and changing. Interested in life processes, plant ontology, and metamorphosis, Sasha's practice is a consideration of environment and embodiment. She holds an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art, London.



Sasha Ferré, **Il devient un nouvel oiseau et choisit pour sa demeure l'élément liquide** (2020), Acrylic on linen, 75 x 60 cm



HENGZHI GONG

Hengzhi Gong is an artist and violinist based in London and Chongqing. In 2018 he graduated with a BA in Industrial Design from the Beijing Institute of Technology and in 2020 with an MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art. His work has been exhibited internationally in such group shows as *Royal Academy Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy of Arts, London (2019), *Get It for Cheap*, Soil Gallery, Seattle (2019), *RCA WIP Show*, Sackler Building, London (2019), *Graduation Show*, Gallery of Beijing Institute of Technology, Beijing (2018) and *What a Joke*, Fruit Space, Chongqing (2016).

The figures in his paintings come from his personal experience and dreams. These add an absurd and humorous narrative that connects one figure to another. The narrative, always stemming from contemporary social and political issues, might lend these figures allegorical meaning and content. In this way, these quotidian images do not just speak for themselves, but also represent something else – a surplus. This process is a critical element that helps Gong conduct political allegory in his work. In addition, his paintings also reflect an element of self-mockery aimed at his powerlessness towards self-censorship as a Chinese artist, which brings an immense sadness (hidden in the happiness) to his paintings. Overall, as a reticent Chinese man who seldom speaks much, Gong does not merely want to document his experiences, dreams and imagination through his paintings, but also utilises forces as another voice to express his identity, political opinions and other thoughts which he could hardly speak out loud in his real life.



Previous page:
Hengzhi Gong, Detail of **The Barber** (2020), Oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm

Hengzhi Gong, **The Fisherman** (2020), Oil on canvas, 150 x 120 cm

JUKKA VIRKKUNEN

Jukka Virkkunen was born in Jyväskylä, Finland and lives and works in London. For Jukka, painting is a physical practice and the studio his arena. The artist experiments with unstretched canvases; folding and twisting their surfaces to create his finished work. Jukka is interested in how each individual material behaves and wants to exist within a painting. In all he does, the physicality of the gesture is always evident. Specific locations have been a source of the conceptual framework for his artworks - ecumenical prayer rooms in airports, contemporary Nordic churches, and the traditional wooden saunas of his native Finland. These empty places of contemplation and silence are each filled with marks of the human bodies that pass through them.

Jukka Virkkunen has recently graduated from an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art. He has exhibited work in solo shows at Gallery Pirkko-Liisa Topelius, Finland (2017) and Gallery Rupla, Finland (2015) as well as group exhibitions including *Final, not Over*, Unit 1 Gallery, London (2020), *Snapshot*, Hockney Gallery, Royal College of Art, London (2020), and *Entrotopia*, Synagóga Centre of Contemporary Art, Slovakia, (2020).

Jukka Virkkunen, **Cloth 03** (2020), Indian ink and debris from the street on a cotton twill dust sheet, Dimensions variable

Next page:
Jukka Virkkunen, **Cloth 06** (2020), Indian ink, acrylic paint on a cotton twill dust sheet, wood, tacks, 168 x 250 cm







XU YANG

Xu Yang graduated with a BA in Painting at Wimbledon College of Arts in 2018 and an MA in Painting at Royal College of Art in 2020. Yang was the winner of Barbican Arts Group Trust ArtWorks Open 2019, following her solo exhibition *100 Carat Diamond* (2020) and has been nominated and shortlisted for many prizes including Contemporary Young Artist (2020), the Signature Art Prize (2019), the Clyde & Co Art Award (2018) and Whitechapel Gallery First Thursday University Competition (2017). She received the Highly Commended award at the Air Gallery Open (2019) and On the Mountain We Stay Residency (2019) supported by No Space Organisation in China. Yang has contributed to collaborative art projects 'Imaging Technologies' with the Painting Research team of Wimbledon College of Arts at Tate Modern (2017) and 'Here She Comes' with Monster Chetwynd at Royal Festival Hall (2016). Yang has recently exhibited at Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery and Saatchi Gallery. Her works are collected in Asia and Europe.

Through exploring childhood fantasies, fetishes and identities through painting, digital and film photography and mixed media, Yang creates constructed female identities. Her artwork looks to resuscitate the lavish and indulgent style of the Rococo for our contemporary moment. Performativity is at the centre of Yang's practice, allowing the artist to bring fantasies into reality.

Xu Yang, **If You Can Choose Only One Thing 10072019** (2019), Print on velvet and textile mounted on board, 66 x 34 cm

LINGRUI ZHANG

Lingrui Zhang was born in Anhui, China. Following on from a BA in Oil Painting at the China Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, he continued with an MA in Painting at Royal College of Art in London. His work has been featured in a number of group exhibitions including *Final, not Over*, Unit 1 Gallery, London (2020), *Blessing in Disguise*, Saint Maison Gallery, London (2020), *Snapshot*, Hockney Gallery, London (2020); *Sunny Art Prize 2019 Exhibition*, Sunny Art Centre, London (2019); *The Hidden Dimension*, Coningsby Gallery, London (2019), *Antibody - Fresh Vision*, C2 Space, North District, OCAT-LOFT, Shenzhen (2017); *Undergraduate Students' Graduation Artwork Exhibition*, Central Academy of Fine Arts, CAFA Art Museum, Beijing (2017); and *The Fictitious Present - INTER YOUTH*, Art Museum of CAA, Hangzhou (2015).

Lingrui's recent art practice mainly focuses on the pictorial and schema language referring to painting itself, in which the concept of 'meta painting' is used to develop the practice of relevant figurative painting. Lingrui's painting behaviour has become a kind of muscle memory and seems to pay more attention to the extension of the painting medium as an ontology.



Lingrui Zhang, **A Man, A Woman** (2017), Oil on linen, 200 x 90 x 2 cm



No 20

Arts