

John Monks

MIRROR IMAGE

Private View

Wednesday 7th June 2017, 6-8pm

Exhibition

8th June – 28th July 2017

Opening Hours:

Tues – Fri 10-5:30 & Sat 11-2



The Shuttered Room. No 2, 2017, oil on canvas, 160 x 186 cm

John Monks has been described as one of the most important artists working in Britain today. He is known as one of the most committed and inspired figurative painters of his generation. Painting with a titanic vigour, Monks is fascinated by the transformation of paint into light and form on the canvas. John Monks' archetypal subject matter is of architectural spaces, usually interiors or inanimate objects whose forms are constructed by rhythmic rays of light that sweep over floorboards and reflect off mirrors and wall panels. Light and the colour white play a key role in the creation of tangible forms in John Monks' work.

A sense of mystery pervades this new series by John Monks. These paintings are intended to suggest a dual existence between solidity and the ethereal. The mirror catching the light in the room, and the open doorway, can be seen as a portal to another reality. The object reflected in the glass of the window at night, is a dark twin to its partner. The paintings challenge the viewer to look anew at the familiar and the commonplace. Through a range of painterly processes – pouring the paint, glazing the

surface in layers and scraping with a palette knife – Monks weaves and layers surfaces to imbue his subjects with a built-in history, implying atmosphere, life and change in seemingly inanimate and immutable objects and scenes.

Monks divides his time between his two studios based in London and France. In London his studio and home are a converted furniture factory in Clapham. He has restored a chateau in France, which was abandoned for fifty years. Like an artwork itself the renovation is a constant work in progress for Monks. The history of the house has gradually revealed itself through the stages of the renovation. Joan of Arc was held prisoner in the village by the English. In the First World War the chateau was a field hospital for the Australian army after Battle of the Somme and in the Second World War the Gestapo used the building for interrogation. In the village there is a house in the shape of Napoleon's hat as a homage to Napoleon.

When asked to discuss the painting by John Monks in the permanent collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, William Lieberman, the then Chairman of 20th Century art at the museum made the following statement, "Monks is a figurative painter, not a realist. His painting is neither fashionable nor facile. Like Picasso at his best, it has guts. His brushwork is bold, even expressionistic, and the visual result speaks with eloquence."

John Monks studied at Liverpool School of Art and the RCA, 1977 - 80. He was represented by Peter Findlay Gallery in New York. His work is in the collections of: The Metropolitan Museum, Yale Centre for British Art, CAS, Arts Council of Great Britain, The V&A, Manchester City Art Galleries and Santa Barbara Museum, California. In 2013 Monks had a solo exhibition at The Barber Institute of Fine Arts in Birmingham. His work is currently included in the group exhibition Public View, which runs until 23 April 2017 at the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool. John Monks has been exhibiting with Long & Ryle since 2002.

Please contact Sarah Long, Carolyn Ryle-Hodges or Kinga Grof for further information.

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