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Helen Beard Topography of Desire

April 14 - May 6, 2024

Curator: Jane Neal

DSC Gallery is thrilled to introduce yet another rising star of the British contemporary art scene - Helen Beard. This UK-based artist has already garnered acclaim for her colourfully raw portrayal of female sexuality, which is balanced delicately using colour, form and abstraction. Damien Hirst, Britain's most famous living artist, believes she is one of the most underrated contemporary practitioners. The exhibition's title explains why: Beard's goal is nothing less than to map out and understand the ever enduring vital component of the human psyche - sexuality.

Beard has appeared in two group exhibitions at Damien Hirst's Newport Street Gallery in London. 'True Colours' (2018) and 'Reason Gives No Answers' (2019). Beard's pieces have been displayed alongside those of Francis Bacon, Tracy Emin, Jeff Koons, Andy Warhol, Banksy, and Martin Eder.

"Whilst she has often borrowed from found imagery sourced from pornography, Beard redefines this material, rooted initially in objectification, by giving fresh voice and agency to female sexuality," writes Jane Neal, the exhibition's curator. Although Beard does not regard her work as 'activist' in nature, she admits that it is indeed *partisan* in striving to reclaim sexual freedom through the power of feminine self-expression. "I guess that my art is guerrilla," Beard says, "in that, I'm not formally taught, but I'm finding a way to talk about sexuality instinctually, using colour and the juxtaposition of shapes to represent the energetic dynamics of desire."

Beard's paintings are distinctive in their composition. Their crops and angles informed by Beard's fifteen-year career in the film industry, first as a wardrobe and set designer, then as an art director. Framing is important, sometimes intended to highlight questionable aspects of the male gaze - deliberately addressing the close crops and focus on the female as a vessel of male desire, at other times, focusing on the subject entirely from her own feminine perspective.

As Jane Neal describes: "Turning her focus to a female-led interrogation of desire, sexual freedom and the power of self-expression through the agency of the human body, Beard's protagonists become fully rounded in their humanity."

"We couldn't be more excited about our newest exhibition of Helen Beard's works," says Edmund Čučka, the Managing Partner of DSC Gallery. "I am personally delighted that we are able to successfully continue in our long-term ambition to bring the best of global contemporary art to Prague for all our collectors to see," Čučka adds.

Solo Exhibitions

2023 *The Tulips are Too Excitable, It Is Winter Here*, Reflex Modern Art Gallery, Amsterdam

2021 *Lyrical Lines*, Paul Stolper Gallery, London, UK

2020 *The Desire Path*, Reflex, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2019 *It's Her Factory*, Unit London, UK

Group Exhibitions

2022 *Sensitive Content*, co-curated by Helen Beard, Unit London, London, UK

2020 *Drawn Together (online)*, Unit London, UK

2019 *Reasons Give No Answers*, Newport Street Gallery, London, UK

2018 *True Colours*, Newport Street Gallery, London, UK

21st *Century Women*, Unit London, London, UK

Collections

Stella Art Foundation, Moscow, Russia

Murderme Collection, London, UK

Goss Michael Foundation, Dallas, USA

Bunker Foundation (Rudin De Woody Collection), LA, USA