WENDY HANNAH: CHROMA

UXBRIDGE MALCOLM SMITH GALLERY In *Chroma*, Wendy Hannah explores colour, pigment and materials to create an immersive environment, reflecting the different facets of her practice.

Wendy has been painting for fifteen years and began her practice by attending community art courses before studying at Elam School of Fine Arts. Through her Bachelor studies she developed a keen interest in the alchemy of paint, investigating chemical reactions and the science of artmaking. She was drawn to processes used by the old masters, particularly the necessity of the era to laboriously and purposefully concoct paints by hand.

Throughout 2018, Wendy has been working with Colin Gooch Technical Director and Mike Clowes Technical Manager of Resene Paints with a tool box of pigments to push her alchemy and create an ambitious homage to colour and form. Having access to some of Resene's experimental paint and base materials has allowed Wendy's practice to move to different areas with the ability to incorporate innovative industrial products in her studio. This exhibition brings Wendy's experimentation with pigment into a new dimension, incorporating thick, thin, sticky, glossy pigments on unexpected sculptural supports.





Wendy visits the Resene lab in Wellington





Chroma is presented in three movements.

Wendy begins with tight, constructed forms - X and O coated with lustre and tone, displayed here as a love letter to destinations that have affected her infatuation with colour. Travelling to Venice earlier in the year, Wendy was profoundly influenced by the city's history. She visited the oldest purveyors of pigment and relished in the information gained from the proprietors with generations of knowledge. Uncovering these historic outlets along the city's canals prompted Wendy to galvanise her way of working when back in the studio. She developed inventive formulas for her paints, reflecting traditional methods but incorporating contemporary additives to stabilise and protect the integrity of the work.

Next, she has released the constrictions of these shapes and reconnoitered a more instinctive application of resin, paint and pigment. These works are indicative of Wendy's practice from the past few years and rely on fluid accidents to create the composition. In the centre of the gallery Wendy has also included a tool she utilises to enhance the purposeful uncertainty of the colour application. The table usually sits in the artist's studio and acts as a moving platform that allows her to pour paint across a support uninhibited, using change of direction and varied motion to encourage the different ingredients of her works to react with each other and settle as they like.

Finally, Wendy has created a new series that almost entirely strips the composition of formal restriction to focus purely on intense, dreamy colour. Using sheets of clear acrylic has enabled Wendy to play with how light transforms hue and how suspended layering can develop hues deeper. Taking cues from colour field painters Helen Frankenthaler and Mark Rothko, here Wendy's colour vibrates and extends past the frame in a similar manner, the scale enabling her pigmented architectural subversions to dance in the space.

Chroma is a celebration of what is possible when an artist has an unbridled love of colour and play. She has a firm commitment to bring modern innovation to time honoured processes and Wendy's continued motivation to investigate the fundamental elements of art making and her confidence to try new pigments and paints will ensure her practice continues to expand and develop, as her materials do.

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