

Mulryan Gallery.

FRESCOES

Lydia Hamblet, Pippa El-Kadhi Brown and Vincenzo Muratore

Mulryan Gallery presents *FRESCOES*, curated with Joséphine May Bailey, bringing together abstracted paintings by Lydia Hamblet and Pippa El Kadhi Brown with bronze and marble works by Vincenzo Muratore. Across painting and sculpture, the exhibition considers what happens to an image, or to a material, once it has been exposed to change.

The title refers to fresco, the ancient technique in which pigment is worked into wet plaster and, as the plaster sets, becomes inseparable from the surface itself. The method reached its fullest expression during the Italian Renaissance, and is one in which the final image is shaped not only by the artist, but by conditions beyond their control. Moisture, temperature, light and the passing of time all play their part, influencing how the pigment settles and changes. What remains is a surface that carries the traces of its own making, shaped as much by its conditions as by the hand that made it.

The three artists gathered here work in this spirit. Across painting and sculpture, their works retain traces of the conditions and processes through which they were made. Muratore, the gallery's current Artist in Residence, works on site, bringing the process of making into direct proximity with the exhibition itself.

The exhibition unfolds across the gallery's two contrasting spaces. In the light-filled atrium, saturated large-scale canvases by Hamblet and El Kadhi Brown fill the walls, while Muratore's bronze sculptures occupy the space between them. The works remain distinctly their own, but their proximity allows relationships between colour, material, form and scale to emerge.

Moving into the second room, daylight gives way to darkness. The space is black and deliberately lit, bringing the surfaces and material qualities of the works into sharper relief. The paintings by Hamblet and El Kadhi Brown shown here are shaped by particular places and conditions, from shifting weather to the intensity of a Nairobi rainy season. Colour and atmosphere register not simply a place observed, but one experienced and lived in.

Muratore's works meet them through a different material language. His monumental *Cocoon (to Alda Merini)*, a dedication to the Italian poet, occupies much of the floor, its form opening and closing upon itself, keeping what it protects partly hidden. His fractured marbles are bound with thread and brass, their seams deliberately left visible. Here, repair does not conceal the break, but becomes part of the history of the object itself.

The room does not so much resolve as open. Muratore's cyanotypes on marble are hinged forms whose outer faces remain grey and veined, while areas of intense blue are held within, visible where the forms open. Using the

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nineteenth-century cyanotype process, in which light-sensitive surfaces are exposed to create deep blue images, Muratore transfers a medium traditionally associated with paper and photography onto marble, allowing the stone itself to become both support and image. Light has done to the stone what weather and environment have done to the paint: in each case, the image emerges through the conditions that material and artist have encountered, rather than simply sitting upon a surface. The principle introduced by fresco at the beginning of the exhibition returns here in another form, as image and material become inseparable through the conditions of their making.

Throughout *FRESCOES*, the traces of change remain visible. Weather, light, fracture and repair become part of the work itself, each leaving a record of what the material has encountered.