

# The approach

## Caitlin Keogh *Alphabet and Daggers*

1 October – 11 November 2018

Opening preview: Sunday 30 September, 5.30–7.30pm

The Approach is pleased to host the debut solo exhibition in London by New York-based artist Caitlin Keogh.

In this exhibition of new works, Caitlin Keogh revisits anatomical themes, depicted in an illustrational style emphasising line and clarity. Keogh's paintings are body-like, containing borders that permit exchange but that can also knot densely within themselves. This group of works returns to the motif of the intestine, literal and symbolic, imagining the torso's interior as the site of painting. Metabolism and digestion play out in *The Cat*, showing a cat licking itself in front of the bones of a bird, and in *Discipline Has Replaced Despair*, with a stylised graphic indicating the passage of matter through the gut by the turning hands of a clock. But rather than considering these notions in purely visceral terms, the work refers more broadly to consuming, processing, and organising information.

Marginalia and decorative characters from medieval manuscripts enter the pictures. This source material takes on significance as a model for combining text and image, and reinforces the idea of a containing border or layer of ornamentation that encircles language. Three paintings (*Punctuation*, *Playing a Song*, and *Alphabet and Daggers*) show characters from an alphabet designed by the artist—a stencil font based on late-19th century Kelmscott Press woodblock type, which was an adaptation of medieval lettering. In this relay of influences, the letters-as-characters become an articulation of time passing and inflecting through familiar forms. Here, Keogh's work points to reading and looking as acts of ingesting, interpreting, and filtering.

While letterforms suggest a compositional space to be scanned from left to right, Keogh alters the conventions of the picture plane by simultaneously showing the vertical wall of a hanging mirror (*Sisters*) or sheet of paper (*Discipline Has Replaced Despair*), layered with marbles strewn on a horizontal field. The motifs of woven and knotted ribbons and ropes continue through this body of work while the surface is punctured and cut to reveal illusionistic layers of space. In *A Name Is a Ribbon*, we see a painting, in effect, painting itself, as disembodied artists' hands lift from the canvas surface to weave in and out of one another. In *Punctuation*, painted holes give an illusion of a perforated surface, allowing overlaid depictions of green strands to seemingly thread themselves through the skin of the painting.

Caitlin Keogh (b. 1982, Anchorage, Alaska, USA) lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Blank Melody*, ICA Boston, Boston, USA (2018); *Loose Ankles*, Bortolami, New York, USA (2016); *The Corps*, Mary Boone Gallery, New York, USA (2015); and *Good Value, Fine Quality*, MoMA PS1, New York, USA (2012). Group exhibitions include *Splendor Solis*, The Approach, London, UK (2018); *Flatlands*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, USA; *Surreal*, Koenig Galerie, Berlin, Germany (both 2016). Keogh's work is in the collection of ICA Boston, Boston, MA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and The Alford Collection of Contemporary Arts, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL.

Coinciding with Caitlin Keogh: *Alphabet and Daggers*, The Approach will also be presenting Sara Cwynar: *Rose Gold*, in The Annexe.

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