



Frame and Building Painting, 2019-2020, mixed materials, 75.5 x 84 cm / 29/7 x 33.1 in

MERLIN JAMES

b.1960, Cardiff, Wales

Merlin James' intensively worked and generally small-scale canvases encompass a wide variety of subject matter including empty interiors, rural landscapes, architecture and, more recently, scenes of sexual intimacy. Often distressed, pierced, cropped or heavily overpainted, these works refine and renew many of painting's most time-honoured concerns – genre and narrative, pictorial space and expressive gesture, the emotive resonance of colour and texture. His apt description of the painterly project of an admired forebear, Alex Katz (James is also an accomplished and widely published critic), is equally applicable to his own practice: he continues to play the grand, complex game of Western painting while reflecting a fully contemporary consciousness of the modern and postmodern disjunctures of history and culture. James lives and works in Glasgow.

Selected solo exhibitions include: *A View of the Clyde River at Glasgow*, A-M-G5, Glasgow, UK (2018); *Long Game*, OCT Boxes Museum, Shunde & OCT Art and Design Gallery, Shenzhen (both China, 2018); *Long Game*, CCA Glasgow (2016); *Freestyle*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Germany (2014); *Merlin James*, Parasol Unit, London; *Signal Box*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (both 2013); and Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin (2012, 2015). Recent group exhibitions include: *Slow Painting*, Leeds Art Gallery, UK (2019), The Levinsky Gallery, University of Plymouth, UK (2020); *Painting Amongst Other Things*, Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia (2018).

In 2007, James represented Wales at the 52nd Venice Biennale. James has been a visiting lecturer at many universities in Britain and the USA and in 1996 gave the Kingston University Stanley Picker Lecture at the Tate Gallery entitled *The Non-Existence of Art Criticism*. In 2002, he was the first holder of the Alex Katz Chair in Painting at The Cooper Union, New York and in 2010, James received the Scottish Arts Council Visual Artists' Award.