

Susan Collis

It's lighter than you think

23rd February – 1st April 2023

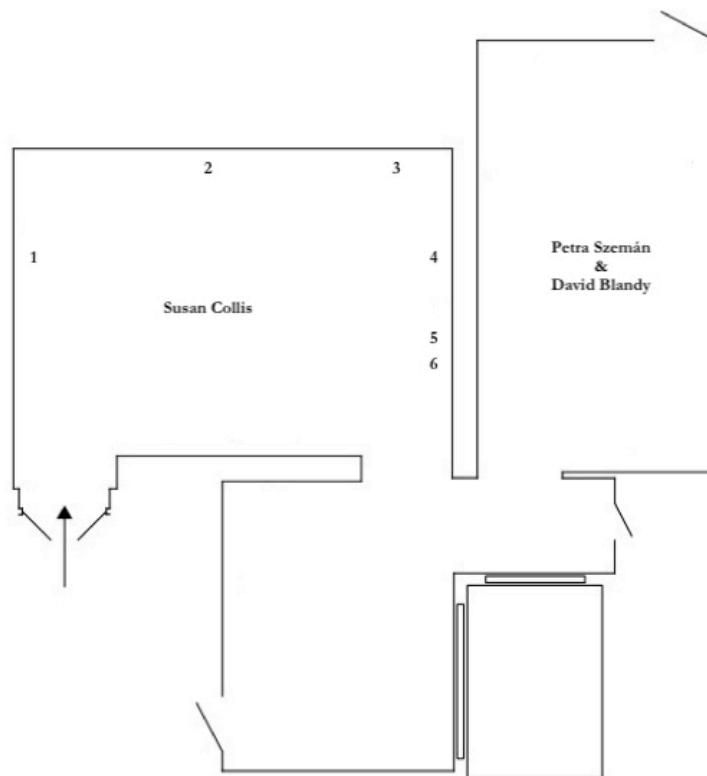
It's lighter than you think is Susan Collis' sixth solo exhibition at the gallery, her first since 2018.

The show is comprised of a series of drawings, impatient coloured marks passing over and through the vertical columns of neatly laid out graphite. These grey rectangles of paper are wrapped over boards and positioned on the floor leaning against the walls of the gallery. The drawings are copies of packing blankets, drawn from life in pencil and inks, the paper then folded around a wooden support. The appearance of these drawings implies a wrapped artwork awaiting installation, the viewer has perhaps disturbed the early stages of hanging an exhibition. Objects whose weight and currency are at present obscured, waiting to be revealed shortly.

Adjacent to the paper constructions, a flat, grey piece of fabric is folded on the floor. From a distance this work, *Glory Days* (2015), is almost indistinguishable from the others. It predates the drawings by some years, a precursory experiment that led to the drawings perhaps? This work is a hand-woven tapestry, which also alludes to the form of a packing blanket. Here Collis has used the home tapestry process specifically as it is seen as a craft or hobbyist pastime, the misuse of materials being a persistent theme for her., though in this case not in a cool detached way, more akin to your favourite elderly relative making an NFT.

The two strategies both result in works that display a faithful rendering, realistic representations of objects we are familiar with. While trompe-l'œil has historically been predominately about deceiving the viewer with drawings of perspective, these works use loose marks alluding to abstract painting, a series of colourful gestures splayed across a grey gridded substrate. Flatness animated by the gestural. As a textile the blankets have a degree of chance inherent in their making. Recycled scraps are pressed together, Collis is making making figurative drawings of chance agglomerations of fabric.

After 20 years of producing works that play games with our perception, the viewer could rightly expect her objects to put up some resistance to being read, or employ some perceptual gambit to wrong foot the viewer. This exhibition text, however, gives the game away long before the works are encountered. Vraisemblance or fooling the eye cannot then be the priority here.



Susan Collis, It's Lighter Than You Think

1.
Your day, 2023
Coloured pencil, graphite, ink on paper, on board
61 x 50.5 x 4.5 cm
2.
Glory Days, 2015
Cashmere, alpaca, mohair, Harris tweeds, gold thread, silver thread, metallic thread, wool, silk, cotton and linen tapestry
101 x 55 cm
3.
It's lighter than you think, 2022
Coloured pencil, graphite, ink on paper, on board
65.5 x 91.5 x 4.5 cm
4.
Make the morning last, 2022
Coloured pencil, graphite, ink on paper, on board
78 x 61.5 x 4 cm
5.
Around Again, 2022
Coloured pencil, graphite, ink on paper, on board
78 x 61.5 x 4 cm
6.
From Rags, 2022
Coloured pencil, graphite, ink on paper, on board
56 x 41 x 5.5 cm

Petra Szemán & David Blandy, Alternate Presence

- Petra Szemán
Monomyth: gaiden / Departure
2018
Single channel video with sound
12 minutes
- David Blandy
How to Fly
2020
Single channel HD video with sound
6 minutes 23 seconds
- David Blandy
Androids Dream
2022
Single channel HD video with sound
5 minutes 17 seconds
- Petra Szemán
Monomyth: gaiden / Master of two worlds
2020
Single channel video with sound
11 minutes