



Tommy Harrison *Tone Cluster*

May 12 - June 30, 2023

54 White Street, New York, NY (US)

GRIMM

Tommy Harrison

Tone Cluster

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GRIMM is pleased to present *Tone Cluster*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by the Manchester-based, British artist Tommy Harrison (b. 1996, Stockport, UK). This is Harrison's first solo exhibition in the United States and first exhibition with GRIMM.

On view in the exhibition is a body of work that exemplifies Harrison's interest in the process of constructing and collapsing the painted image. Harrison begins by drawing directly onto the canvas using tailor's chalk, establishing an initial framework for each composition that becomes quickly discarded. Operating without preconceived logic, the process by which images emerge is circuitous, with the artist responding in stages to his own previous marks and gestures until a direction begins to reveal itself. This provides a blueprint, from which nascent formal and figurative imagery emerges, creating a point of tension from which Harrison can continue to build or dismantle with the application of oil paint.

Allowing for a kind of ordered spontaneity to guide his process, as opposed to contrived planning, Harrison slowly negotiates a plurality of possible compositional outcomes, working on multiple canvases simultaneously over weeks and months. His paintings are often anchored by a motif or found subject derived from art history and wider visual culture. Cropped bodies, animals, theatrical curtains, ornate patterns, anonymous landscapes or claustrophobic interiors, are appropriated and deployed as pure form, stripped of narrative or didactic function. For Harrison, the semiotic value of his symbols is equal to that of their formal qualities.



Detail | *Prowler*, 2023

It is more about *how* the image is arrived at and not *what* it supposedly shows us. This leads to a deliberate discord over harmony, where narrative is evaded in favor of competing, even jarring, compositions. The image of the Crucifixion has appeared in a number of Harrison's recent works, but is variously cropped, rotated and hidden in order to undo the act of seeing such an oversaturated image laden with inherited significance.

The emotive qualities of the so-called 'original' are stripped away, causing representational elements to function as shape, form and color. The meld of structural and iconographic elements leads to a feeling of incongruity or displacement, verging on the surreal, where characters are frozen and places are intangible and undefined.



Portrait of the artist in his studio, 2023
Photographed by Michael Pollard

Figures evade the viewer's gaze, emerging or fleeing from the picture plane altogether. As linear narrative has been avoided, our focus is drawn back to the handling of paint, which drifts from thick impastos to light taps and thin glazes. The material is often manipulated on the surface after application using a wide range of tools and techniques, building each image through the disparate properties of the medium, which navigate both economy and excess.

About the artist

Tommy Harrison is currently studying for an MFA in painting at the Manchester School of Art, for which he received the Haworth Trust Painting Scholarship. Solo exhibitions include *Frozen Mid-Melt*, Pipeline Contemporary, London (UK). Harrison's work has been included in group exhibitions at Chapelle de l'Humanité, Paris (FR); Islington Mill, Salford (UK); Elysium Gallery, Swansea (UK) where he was shortlisted for the Beep International Painting Prize; Bankley Gallery, Manchester (UK) and Holden Gallery, Manchester (UK).

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Abyssal Plain
2023

Oil on canvas
200 x 120 cm | 78 3/4 x 47 1/4 in

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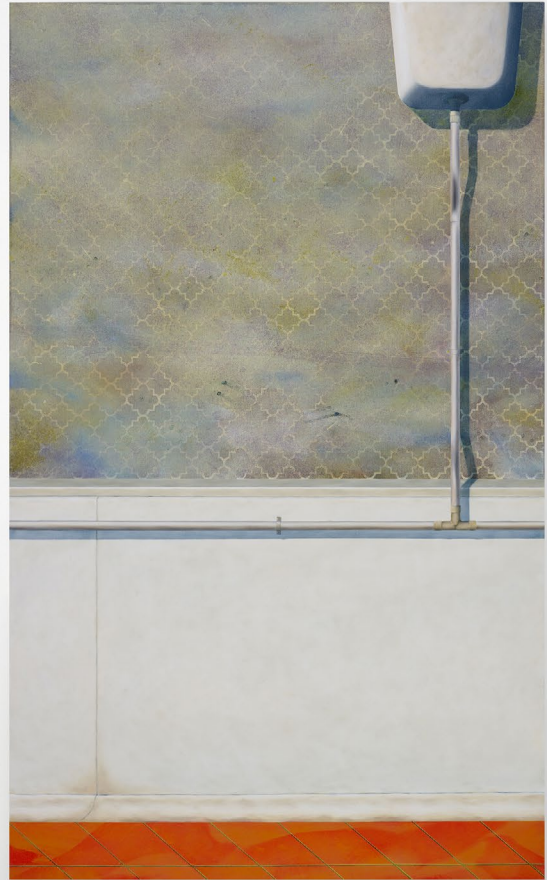




Scatter
2023

Oil on canvas
200 x 120 cm | 78 3/4 x 47 1/4 in

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White Night and
White Night ii
2023

Oil on canvas
200 x 120 cm | 78 3/4 x 47 1/4 in (each)

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Detail | *White Night ii*, 2023



Prowler
2023

Oil on canvas
200 x 120 cm | 78 3/4 x 47 1/4 in

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Contraption ii
2023

Oil on canvas
200 x 120 cm | 78 3/4 x 47 1/4 in

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Scuttle
2023

Oil on canvas, diptych
200 x 240 cm | 78 3/4 x 94 1/2 in

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Corridor
2023

Oil on canvas
200 x 120 cm | 78 3/4 x 47 1/4 in

GRIMM



Tommy Harrison

b. 1996, Stockport (UK)

Lives and works in Manchester (UK)

EDUCATION

2023 MFA Painting, Manchester School of Art,
Manchester (UK)

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2020 Haworth Trust Painting Scholarship,
Manchester School of Art, Manchester (UK)

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Tone Cluster*, GRIMM, New York, NY (US)

2022 *Frozen Mid-Melt*, Pipeline Contemporary,
London (UK)

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *Divinity*, Islington Mill, Salford (UK)

Nothing has changed, Everything has changed,
Elysium Gallery, Swansea (UK)

High Humanity, curated by Jack Siebert,
Chapelle de l'Humanité, Paris (FR)

Bankley Open, Bankley Gallery, Manchester
(UK)

2021 *MA Degree show*, Holden Gallery, Manchester
(UK)