

Diurne

Kate Spencer Stewart

06 May – 17 June 2023

Emalin is pleased to present *Diurne*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Kate Spencer Stewart (b. 1984 in Phoenix, AZ, US). This is Stewart's first exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition comprises seven paintings in oil on linen. Each one is square, and the series spans three sizes – ranging between vast fields and focused vignettes, each painting represents Stewart's attempt to paint 'nothing, or the void'. The canvases are made of tightly woven linen. Stewart uses them because of their particular relationship with light: the linen's grain mounted with oil paint's luminosity. The texture of Stewart's brushstrokes in oil paint crushed with mineral and synthetic pigments is brought into focus as it reflects light in cyclical patterns. Her paintings appear at the same time as pure surface and as pure depth, one moment impenetrable and another a plunge.

Their cycles are woven back into the exhibition's texture with its title, *Diurne*. Meaning the quality of a life led in the daytime, *diurnality* is the sister of *nocturnality*, which in turn describes music written to be set in the night. The exhibition is presented without artificial light: circadian rhythms will transform the surfaces of Stewart's paintings throughout its duration. The ambient hum of light and its city flows in and out of their picture plane.

Against Sentimentality

by Reba Maybury

“Sentimentality, the ostentatious parading of excessive and spurious emotion, is the mark of dishonesty, the inability to feel; the wet eyes of the sentimentalist betray his aversion to experience, his fear of life, his arid heart; and it is always, therefore, the signal of secret and violent inhumanity, the mask of cruelty.”

— James Baldwin

Eight Hours Don't Make a Day is the name of a television series created in 1972 by Rainer Werner Fassbinder. The five episodes were commissioned by public West German television to appeal to working class viewers, telling the story of a young man, his family, his lover and his factory job in Cologne. As the title suggests, the series reflects the strains of labour that we are segmented into and how living and loving is manipulated by this.

'Life, Labour, Love' was the series tagline and as instantly mundane as this may sound, or even cynically corporate, it is in fact serenely real. Where the story line is unspectacular, it is there that its power lies, there is no manipulation of emotions, no escapist fantasy, no floundering poetics. Instead, Fassbinder showed his audience simply how it was and still very much is. Tenderness is never sentimental and neither is capitalism.

For centuries one of the prominent roles of painting was to create the effect of the unreal. Painting was considered powerful and it was often created with the intention to coerce, especially when it was put in a church. To look at the history of western painting before the industrial revolution is to often look at paintings of religious figures wearing fabric that quite literally shines and dazzles. This can appear otherworldly and this can be as inspiring as it can be terrifying. These clothes were never painted simply to give the viewer visual pleasure, there was always something else lurking underneath. Sometimes this undertone was judgement, at other times it was to declare a hierarchy to humanity and perhaps the sentimentalist is one of the most passive judges of them all, actively turning a blind eye to social distinctions in favour of what is nice.

The sentimentalist is afraid of grit, or perhaps the sentimentalist is afraid of what truly mangles us in all of its boredom. Nature is never far behind this and nature is very real. Sentiment ruins an appetite for reality.

Stewart requested that the Emalin team document local birds to create an image for the promotional flyer. The artist has drawn a crow from a photo that Lucy took on her way to work one morning.

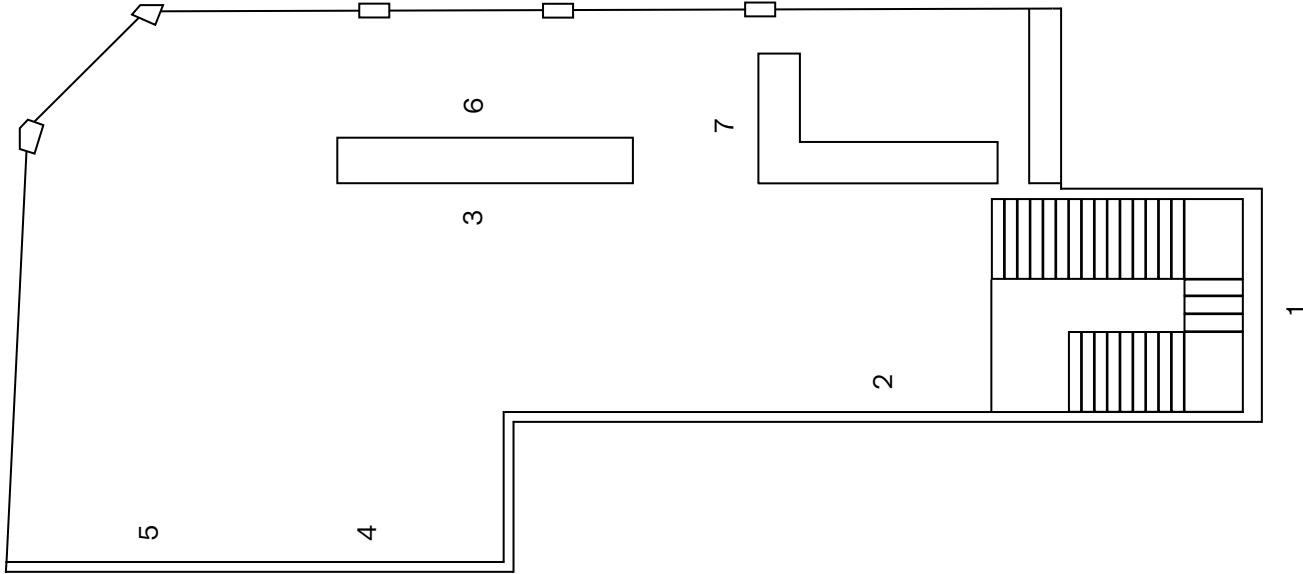
This exhibition opens on St Georges Day as it appears in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, on the day of the coronation of the king and five days after May Day.

The title of this show is *Diurne*, meaning the opposite of nocturne. Diurnal creatures conduct their business during the day, sleeping at night. These paintings are displayed without artificial light. There is no hiding from them in their lack of pageantry.

Reba Maybury, April 2023

LIST OF WORKS

1. *Smith, 2023*
oil on linen
167.6 x 167.6 x 2.7 cm
66 x 66 x 1 inches
2. *Jochen's Haus, 2023*
oil on linen
167.6 x 167.6 x 2.7 cm
66 x 66 x 1 inches
3. *Alphabet, 2023*
oil on linen
167.6 x 167.6 x 2.7 cm
66 x 66 x 1 inches
4. *Phthalo Right, 2023*
oil on linen
213.4 x 213.4 x 2.7 cm
84 x 84 x 1 inches
5. *Phthalo Left, 2023*
oil on linen
213.4 x 213.4 x 2.7 cm
84 x 84 x 1 inches
6. *Powdered Wig, 2023*
oil on linen
167.6 x 167.6 x 2.7 cm
66 x 66 x 1 inches
7. *May, 2023*
oil on linen
55.9 x 55.9 x 2.7 cm
22 x 22 x 1 inches



Kate Spencer Stewart (b. 1984 Phoenix, AZ, US) lives and works in Los Angeles, US. She graduated with a BFA from Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, US in 2006 and completed her MFA in painting at University of California, Los Angeles, CA, US in 2017.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Convention*, Bureau, New York, NY, US (2022); *Nature*, La Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels, BE (2022); *Kate Spencer Stewart*, Park View / Paul Soto, Los Angeles, CA, US (2020); and *The Gallery @ Le Hangar Restaurant*, Paris, FR (2019). Stewart's work has been included in group exhibitions held at Hakuna Matata, Los Angeles, CA, US (2023); Emalin, London, UK (2022); Neuer Kunstverein Wien, Vienna, AT (2021); Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, NY, US (2021); Misako & Rosen Gallery, Tokyo, JP (2021); and Piktoqram Gallery Warsaw, PL (2019).