

BODENRADER

Judith Dean

One Thing and the Others

FEBRUARY 10 – MARCH 23, 2024

Bodenrader is pleased to present *One Thing and the Others*, an exhibition by London-based artist Judith Dean. This is Dean's first solo presentation in the United States.

Dean's approach is informed by both early Renaissance paintings, which took advantage of developments in linear perspective and realistic proportion to create illusions of depth within expansive pictorial space; as well as Chinese literati painters from over a century prior, who rendered atmospheric scenes in calligraphic brushwork and sought to convey one's inner life to the outside world. It is often stated that in order to analyze and appreciate a literati painting, an audience must 'read' it. Dean takes this command to heart, painting her canvases on a flat surface using watered down pigment and calligraphy brushes — tools used for writing — to 'transcribe' forms from abstracted language. She adopts elements from these disparate strategies in painting, utilizing perspectival techniques to create illusions of space within her compositions which are assembled via interpretation and mediation.

The network of images that comprise the walls of these spaces, which range from Japanese woodcuts and 19th century Western paintings, to contemporary film stills and documentary photography, can seem unrelated. Lacking coherent context, their meaning is obscured, as is often the nature of online image circulation. Her source material is mostly selected from the broad array of results of simple keyword searches in Wikimedia Commons, an open-access repository of visual content in the public domain. Dean complicates these images' manufactured categorizations and loosens previous associations determined by the invisible forces of metadata, opening each image up to new readings. Linguistic correlations and slippages from which the chosen images originate build obscured, paradoxical, internal logics within each painting.

Dean organizes this matrix of information to not only challenge viewers' interpretation of the images that populate her paintings, but also the physical, objective structure of the paintings themselves. Sometimes her paintings on polyester and linen are stretched over shaped wooden supports and worked to completion (or very near so). She will then re-stretch these works onto larger supports of either the same or a different shape, leaving the fabric to bear traces of its original form including creases, staple holes, and painterly marks that were initially hidden from spectators. Other times, Dean takes advantage of this compositional logic she has established, as well as our own understanding and interpretation of two-dimensional representations of depth, to create disorienting structures that can be read as illusions themselves. In doing so, she further clouds the reality of each painting's creation.

Dean's simultaneous compression and expansion of space echoes not only her negotiation of multiple historic influences and painterly methodologies, but also the very nature of how she instrumentalizes her source imagery. The deliberate flattening and arrangement of these images into a persistent perspective creates a confined, enclosed sense of space and confounds immediate recognition, while allowing for a vast range of interpretations to develop, expanding ever-outward from Dean's imaginary planes into our own reality, inviting us to find meaning within and beyond the illusive.

Judith Dean (b. 1965, Billericay, UK) lives and works in London. She received her BFA from the Wimbledon School of Art, London, and attended the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam from 1991-1993. Selected solo exhibitions and performances include South Parade, London, UK; Hales, London, UK; Beaconsfield, London, UK; The Poetry Society, London, UK; The Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, UK; Slade School of Fine Art, London; Market Gallery, Glasgow, UK; and York University, York, UK. Selected group exhibitions and performances include White Columns, New York, NY; Kunsternes Hus, Oslo, Norway; TULCA, Galway, Ireland; Galeria Cadaqués, Cadaqués, Spain; Tintype, London, UK; June Art Fair, Basel, Switzerland; Pangolin, London, UK; Mains d'Œuvres, Paris, France; Herbert Read Gallery, Canterbury, UK; Rob Pruitt's Flea Market, Tate Modern, London, UK; Whitstable Biennale, Whitstable, UK; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dunkerque, Dunkirk, France; Jerwood Space, London, UK; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia. Dean was the winner of the Jerwood Sculpture Prize in 2005 and is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Arts at the University of the West of England, Bristol.

Judith would like to dedicate this exhibition to John Dean (1936-2023) and Hua Gong.