

The Approach is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by Sam Windett. A new catalogue featuring an essay by Martin Herbert is being published by The Approach to accompany the exhibition.

*Column and Eclipse* is a hieroglyph lacking a Rosetta Stone, which is to say that it is exemplary Sam Windett. With its loops and curves in excited motion around a dappled column that divides a dense black disc, this compact but thrumming painting feels like it might be diagramming some kind of mystical energy transfer: a view from the edge underwritten by dusty studies in esotericism, a penetrating of some essential 'essence' of experience. Not so; but if you interpreted contemporary art in the way that TV adverts parodying it seem to think is au courant, you'd ask what these forms symbolise, what they represent. Serious painting hasn't voiced that substitutive language for some time, though we may be wistful for days when it did. Certainly Windett's art conveys some of the frissons of modernist art that rode on encryption. It speaks, however, firmly to its own moment.

Windett is half a formalist, half something else. As descriptive titles like *Plant, Discs & Construction* suggest, he builds still-life assemblies in his studio: effectively pretexts for making paintings and, for the viewer, ways into the canvas, these serve to structure explorations of variegated touch, modulated spatiality. He'll arrange together, say, twists and loops of wood veneer blotted with paint, curls of shiny grey tape and the blade from a circular saw, situate these in front of a coloured background, then paint them partway into spacious abstraction, a hinterland made convivial by tireless nuancing. The eye, as it's steered baroquely around, picks up rhymes, the nonverbal satisfaction of curves abutting verticals, and thoughtful imbalances or tilts. If Windett were operating at the time of Paul Nash or an Edward Wadsworth or an Eileen Agar, to list a few of his seeming British forebears in terms of the charged, pregnant, ambivalent object array, then his atmospheres might bespeak a sense of the miraculous glinting within the commonplace. Windett isn't trying to resurrect that; at most, he's nodding to it before veering off in several additional directions at once. His art, in part a chamber for compounded transhistorical echoes sees painting as a stage for an experience that is passage-like and haptic, that credits a viewer with a sophisticated and knowing eye for painting while sustaining a tenuous magic.'

Martin Herbert

(Extract from the catalogue essay).

*(This document was automatically generated by Contemporary Art Library.)*