

The Modern Institute are delighted to present 'Expressions', an exhibition of new paintings and performance by Sue Tompkins.

Tompkins' practice is lead by an enquiry into language and personal expression, through the spoken, sung, and written word. Over several years this has incorporated text, sound, installation and live performance. Addressing language in visual and spatial terms, Tompkins works with the fragments of words, phrases and lyrics gathered from everyday encounters and experiences. By an almost rhythmical accumulation of words - ordered, interrupted and repeated – Tompkins allows us to experience the flow of language in state of flux – both open ended and closed - paused, altered and undone.

For Tompkins' fourth exhibition with The Modern Institute, she is presenting several new paintings on canvas. 'Expressions' is the first exhibition in which Tompkins has installed only paintings, independently of her works on paper. Producing paintings of varying scales, each presenting text, Tompkins has allowed the process of painting to drive each piece - a process of honest expression and experimentation.

Text is both the focus and subject matter of her paintings, framing a context within which the viewer can play a part. Tompkins applies the paint liberally onto each canvas, often directly with her hands, pushing and pulling it across the canvas' surface. Beginning with a selection of fragments of words, the process of painting these on to the canvas becomes a point of re-evaluation and adaptation. Dictated by the feeling of the painting, Tompkins plays with familiar everyday words 'Let' or 'Saw', alongside random couplings and disjointed words, 'Young Wheat' and 'Be yond'. Displayed in succession on the wall, these pieces create coincidental sentences, or implied phrases of communication, like a chain of reflecting scenes - 'Let – You – Sue Me'. Rather than acting as a background to the text, Tompkins' use of paint is integral to the relaying or distortion of the words meaning. Utilising both text and paint in a free and associative manner, occupying the spaces between the words, and the spaces between each painting – Tompkins lets language inhabit the gallery space.

In response to the spatial restrictions imposed by the canvas, Tompkins has cut the surface of several of the paintings with a scalpel blade and by doing so she intends to allow air, light and space to become a part of the painting. Creating movement and a form rhythmical composition.

As part of the exhibition Tompkins performed her new piece 'Letherin through the grille' during the preview evening. Creating a new verb like word: 'Letherin' could also be interpreted as 'Let-her-in',

alluding to the way a voice could carry through gaps, windows and grills. Through an expression of singing and speech, Tompkins asks us to let her, or someone in, both metaphorically and emotionally.

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