

GALERIE

HUBERT

WINTER

STEPHEN SKIDMORE

Prae Oculis Habeatur

Opening: October 24, 2024, 6–9pm

October 25 – November 23, 2024

Galerie Hubert Winter is pleased to present the third solo exhibition at the gallery by the London-based artist Stephen Skidmore. Born in 1950, Skidmore has been living and working in West London, creating his art in a small, modest studio that has influenced the subject matter and themes of his work. His paintings are often set against the backdrop of his immediate environment, offering intimate glimpses of everyday scenes.

Stephen Skidmore's artistic trajectory has been defined by his personal, somewhat isolated approach to artmaking. Despite his conceptualist roots at the Nottingham School of Art—where he studied and set up a café in his studio—he largely taught himself to paint autodidactically, building a distinctive style without formal instruction. His investigation of perception links him with painterly traditions that address the nature of seeing and experiencing the world, something found in the work of Walter Sickert and other British painters of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, who influenced his style. This places Skidmore within a continuum of British realism that has evolved to accommodate both modern life and more conceptual concerns.

His *Rain Paintings*, which were shown by the gallery in 2009, are a hallmark of his oeuvre. This series of works, inspired by the view from his studio window, captures fleeting moments in a rain-drenched London landscape. His focus on the effects of rain distorting the scenes outside his window offers a nuanced commentary on perception, memory, and time. These pieces are often marked by broad brushstrokes, minimal color palettes, and a strong interplay between abstraction and realism. While painters like David Hockney focused on color, space, and light in everyday scenes, Skidmore's muted color palettes and his solitary, introspective subjects offer a more reflective and somber view of the British cityscape—one that mirrors the melancholy isolation often associated with urban living in the late 20th century.

The works in this exhibition, shown for the very first time, follow on from his last show, *Window Paintings* in 2015. Their period of production spans from 2016 to 2020, continuing up to 2024. Some of the new paintings, which suggest either landscapes or "reflections in puddles on rainy pavements," formally continue the way Stephen Skidmore applied brushstrokes in his *Rain Paintings* and *Window Paintings*. However, most of the new works are abstract, playing with color and a dynamic composition of squares against the background of the canvas. The color palette and compositions suggest a playful rhythm or pattern. These works evoke a sense of "crude" geometric abstractions, which give the impression of having been revised or reworked with fast, intuitive scribbling or doodling. It feels as though the paintings were resuscitated after a period of contemplation, then impulsively reworked with these scribbles.

Stephen Skidmore's paintings reflect a deep engagement with post-war British art's preoccupation with both the everyday and the emotional resonance of place. His works can be seen as part of a lineage that incorporates post-war melancholic realism, conceptual art, and a modernist concern with seriality and process, positioning him as a unique figure in British painting of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Prae oculis habeatur—keep under observation.

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