

'In the Meantime' is an exhibition of works by two artists, Juliette Blightman and Clémentine Bruno. Together their works might be described as being concerned with appearance and disappearance. Across Blightman's photographic works and Bruno's paintings, forms appear gradually, if at all, and what comes to the surface does so slowly, for a moment before disappearing again. What remains after an event has passed is perhaps of more relevance here than what actually happened. Form hesitates, light fades, the image withdraws and meaning is displaced into what is usually secondary; the ground, the subtitle, the afterimage.

Clémentine Bruno's paintings are structured around the fragile relationship between form and ground, and are concerned with what might be described as apparition and disappearance; that is the way that form comes into being and the suggestion, through the handling of paint, that it might just as easily recede again. Using traditional gesso on wooden panels (materials which one might note are historically associated with religious icons), Bruno treats what used to be a preparatory stage in painting as something to dwell on. She allows ordinary objects such as matchboxes, scraps of paper and cigarette packs to partially appear, emerging from the layers of gesso and pigment without ever fully separating from the surface that produces them.

In Bruno's works layers of paint are accumulated, so that painting is not a single moment of representation but an articulation of time spent. Painting is a form of duration, of being in time. Figuration is never fixed, and there is no clear hierarchy between object and ground. One might say that there is a sense that figuration emerges from the blur rather than from an outline, from a patient persistence and faith in materiality rather than description. In this sense, these works recall the legacy of the 'informe' as articulated by George Bataille, an idea that challenged the idea that everything should have an ideal form. This idea was later developed by the art historians Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois to rethink the then dominant formalist accounts of modernist painting and break down the division between form and content. Paintings, here, can exist in a space that resists clarity, inhabiting the world through forms that insist rather than fully declare themselves.

The photographic works of Juliette Blightman operate in a related register of delay and withholding; for instance her photographs of fireworks hold a moment of light appearing just before it disappears again into the night sky. Light is caught at the moment it begins to fade, but the sound, movement and explosion of what is pictured, are absent. Instead we might think of these as images depicting time rather than action, the interval between prelude and aftermath. Rather the expected ending of an explosion, we are caught in an afterglow that we know will be followed by darkness and erasure.

In other works, the image withdraws almost entirely. Black fields appear with short textual phrases placed at the bottom of the frame, like subtitles detached from any visible scene. These pieces of texts are fragments; apologies, half-remembered statements, messages. They do not explain what is missing in the field of black above them, and instead in the absence of an image, language becomes a way of articulating what is not immediately visible. Meaning has to be assembled privately through memory, projection and association. These works might be understood as continuing Blightman's engagement with the idea that language activates memory and private associations that can be traced back to her two books 'Scripts and Descriptions' (2010, 2018) in which texts operate not as accompaniments or prompts (as a conventional script would) but as material in its own right. Through this, Blightman's work insists on the process paying attention, and duration replaces instant recognition. The image is not there to be consumed, indeed the image might not be there at all. Representation becomes an everyday, intimate and solitary act of looking rather than a shared experience.

Taken together, the works in 'In the Meantime' seem to occupy a shared condition of waiting. Not quite waiting for something to actually happen but more rather waiting as a way of being with things, an insistence that nothing particularly happening is itself a way of being and that space and time are there to be lived in through a process that is layered, accumulative and intimate. These are works to dwell amongst, to move slowly between and to notice small differences. This is therefore not an exhibition about images as finished forms, but about how images come into being, how they fade, and how they are held in time. What is shared between these works is an insistence on attention; on staying with what is partial, provisional, or quietly receding.

Niru Ratnam

About Juliette Blightman

Juliette Blightman lives and works in London, she incorporates drawing, painting, photography, performance, text and video to explore the relationship between art and life. Her works create a portrait of contemporary communication and existence. Her work has been presented in exhibitions at Kunsthalle and Kunstmuseum Bremerhaven (2025), Cultuurcentrum Strombeek, Grimbergen (2024), Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2024), Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2021), the Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art, Middelburg (2021), the Kunsthalle Bern, Bern (2016); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bregenz (2014); Hayward Gallery, London (2011); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2010) and the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2008). Along with performances and video presentations at Kunsthalle and Kunstmuseum Bremerhaven (2025), Liste Art Fair, Basel (2025), Basel Scial Club (2025), Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2023); Museion Bolzano (2023); Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2023); Fridericianum, Kassel (2020) and South London Gallery, London (2016). She is Professor of Expanded Painting at Kunstakademie Münster. Blightman will be presenting a performance at Centre Pompidou in January 2026.

About Clémentine Bruno

Clémentine Bruno (b.1994, Paris) is a contemporary artist whose multidisciplinary practice investigates the history and mechanisms of painting and institutional representation through layered material processes. Bruno studied History of Art and Fine Art at Goldsmiths, University of London (BA) and holds an MA in Fine Art from the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. Bruno's work has been presented in prominent gallery contexts and institutional frameworks, including her solo exhibition Educational Complex at Tonus in Paris (2024) supported by Fluxus Art Projects, and the solo Spectres in Pentimento at Tabula Rasa Gallery in Beijing (2025) and notable group exhibitions at Mendes Wood DM, Brussels (2025) and One Kiss is All It Takes, Halle Nord (Geneva, 2023). In 2024 she was also awarded a prestigious residency at the Villa Medici – French Academy in Rome, where she conducted research into historical art techniques that inform her ongoing exploration of painting's material and conceptual frameworks.