

application of paint. As she says 'I want to create a familiar feeling, a commonality, or a way to join with people,' noting that there 'is something about certain objects that is innately common, that implies a belonging.' Like all Tompkins's work these painted things seek to understand the texture of ordinariness. She is concerned with the way in which one life is bound to another far more by everyday objects, gestures and moments than it is by grand narratives.

Book Launch and Talk

Hayley Tompkins in conversation with Louise Hopkins

11.12.22. 4–5pm. Free. In person and livestreamed.

Book via Eventbrite.

Artists Hayley Tompkins and Louise Hopkins in conversation about paint, objects, and 'the event of colour' to launch the book which accompanies Tompkins's exhibition, which includes new photography and an essay by Camila McHugh. Please wear a mask when attending this talk.

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Hayley Tompkins

Far

22.10.22 – 29.01.23

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Hayley Tompkins (b.1971, Leighton Buzzard, England) makes work infused with vibrant colour, from her films and painted objects to her panel paintings. This exhibition brings together a selection of new and existing work from the last fifteen years that urges us to look again at the spaces we inhabit and the objects that fill our lives. The exhibition's title, *Far*, alludes to the distance between yourself and a thing, and the act of pushing objects into a space set apart, a process that takes place when Tompkins turns her attention to things. As she says, she wants to 'make things out of paint that are otherworldly, yet ordinary at the same time.'

The exhibition opens in the lower gallery with several moving-image works dating from 2007 to the present, which are displayed here as a group for the first time. These works give attention to commonplace objects and spaces. *Lent Moving Pictures* (2007) brings together media imagery from magazines – advertisements for clothing, footwear, staircases. *Interstice* (2008) invites a reflection on the overlooked spaces and objects of waiting. There are cars at junctions, interiors, a stairway, places we pass through between the more central moments of our lives; and a phone and a magazine, both things we look at when we're filling time. The most recent film, *And Sunflower* (2022), collages together close-ups of pavements, flowers and wires. In all the films the imagery is occasionally abstracted as the lens flares, filters are used, or the image is viewed in close-up, at an angle or out of focus. As forms and colour move over the surface of the screen, the films become more like moving paintings.

The small size of the projections loosely echoes the small screen of the digital camera or mobile phone on which they were recorded. This correlation between the method of creation and display reflects Tompkins's aversion to illusion, her feeling that things are what they are and should be presented as such. The painted chairs, on which you are invited to sit to watch the films, extend this ethos too – they are not paintings *of* chairs (illusions), but painting *on* chairs that exist in the material world. The *Picture Pails* (2015), dispersed between the chairs, act as containers for found photographic imagery – oversized faces from magazine

advertisements. As the artist has said of similar works, they act 'almost like cameras', capturing imagery.

In the small gallery the acid yellow glow of *But I don't even think it's you* (2022) draws the gaze, the bright floor casting its colour onto the walls of the space, celebrating what Tompkins has called the 'event of colour'. The installation is carefully composed through the frame of the door, each painted paper bag placed with consideration for the whole. Such placement of objects is also important to Tompkins in the arrangement of an exhibition space, with things often hung with an element of disruptive irreverence. As she says 'it's a rhythm I want to try and build across the room'.

A new series of abstract acrylic panel paintings is shown in the upper gallery. Painting across the surface of several panels simultaneously, the artist creates works that experiment with the pleasure of gesture and colour. She talks about painting as 'a particular moment of stilled time', the preservation of the energy of the image at a single point. Her colours are vivid, yet her gesture is harder to pin down. Rather than the free-flowing movement often associated with large-scale abstract painting, Tompkins employs a loose, quivering gesture that remains slightly unsure of itself and staccato in rhythm. She slips between diluted veils of colour and moments of more intense saturated colour, creating an uneasy, hesitant feeling, of decisions being made and re-made as the painting comes into being. These paintings have titles related to speaking – such as *Speak Removals*, *Speakdriver*, *Speakpatched* (all 2022) – asking us to consider them as means of the communication of a fleeting mood or feeling, a passing thought, a moment in time.

The paintings are joined by several of Tompkins's objects and collages including two shirts from her series *The Shirt Says I Feel* (2021) and *Mallet* (2022). Like the chairs, these ordinary things are painted on in a fluid, mosaic-like style, using vibrant colours across the surface. Tompkins chooses objects we wear, grasp, sit on. They are things that have a close relationship to the body, so that, in a way, Tompkins makes human touch visible through the