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CURIOSITY

71

The entrance features a central door and two large windows, all framed in dark brown wood. The central door has a decorative glass pattern with a grid of small panes and a gold handle. The windows display blue and white decorative graphics, including stylized architectural elements and the letters 'Q&C' in the bottom right corner of the right window. The building is constructed of light-colored stone blocks, and the entrance is set within a recessed area. A large tree trunk is visible on the left, and a small green shrub is on the right. The ground is paved with grey stone tiles.

Q&C

There is something in the air; the desire to commune, sway, chatter, chant. We escape through moving, through music; step outside of time and our assumed daily roles. When we move differently, we think differently – the social order shifts. The people at the party blur, chaos creeps like a vine. The glass tips over and the mask slips.

A Dithyramb is a chaotic choral hymn sung and danced in honour of Dionysus. This ancient Greek god reappears throughout history in many guises. Dionysus has become a symbol of our wilder selves; the impulses reigned in by the social order for both good and bad. Dionysus and the festivals held in his honour are an established subject of painting and performance: from Euripides' play *The Bacchae* (405 BC), William-Adolphe Bouguereau's neo classical painting *The Youth of Bacchus* (1884), or the Performance Group's radical *Dionysus in '69* (1969). Like moments of mass celebration or unrest, Dionysus weaves through time, erupting again and again. To represent Dionysus is a contradiction; imagining violence whilst choreographing it into something rational and ordered.

Fay Nicolson is an artist dancing through history – tracing connections within culture and re-enacting them in the present. In this exhibition Fay brings together three strands of image making that circle around performance, staging and the Dionysiac spirit. Large paintings direct onto the wall are rhythmic and immersive; decorative or commemorative like a civic mural. Small prints on brushed aluminium reveal part of the artist's process; of making models and backdrops to generate source imagery for further paintings. Silk works hang in the main gallery space. These originate as quick paintings on paper. They are made in an improvised way, often whilst dancing, so as to communicate energy, movement and a loss of focus or control. Fay selects works on paper and transfers them to silk using a reactive dye print process; fixing the images into the fabric. Unlike a stretched painting on canvas, these works are meant to reveal their materiality – to flow, quiver and respond to the currents in the gallery space.

Fay Nicolson (b. 1984, Derby) is based in South East London. Nicolson's work cuts a dynamic line between performance and painting. Visual works channel the energy of performance and draw out synesthetic connections between sound, movement and image. Nicolson has a long-standing interest in the cross-disciplinary projects of the avant-garde. Historical research fuels experimental studio practice that foregrounds embodiment, staging and play. These concerns are explored within Nicolson's images but expand beyond the art object's bounds to include a consideration of how art works are installed and experienced in galleries, theatres and beyond.

As well as exhibiting in galleries internationally, Nicolson has also performed musical and dance works as a solo artist, collaborator and performer. Nicolson has taught internationally and currently lectures at Kingston School of Art. Nicolson runs online art salon *Salome Salmacis*.

Dithyramb

Fay Nicolson

February 17th - March 18th 2023

Quip & Curiosity

71 Tenison Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EF











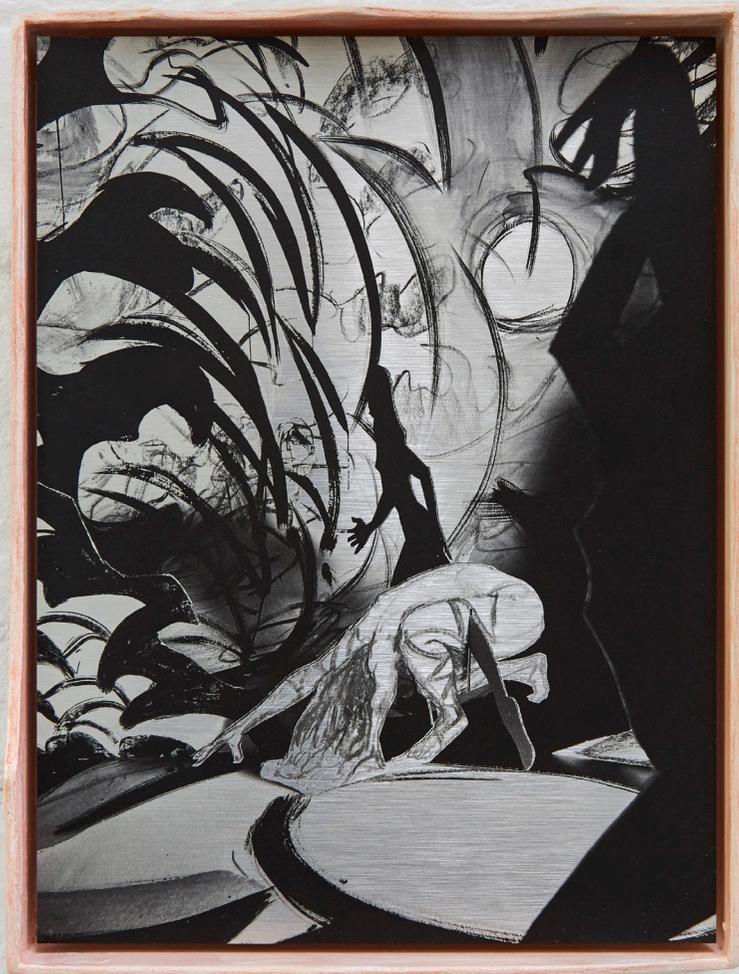
We are the floating scaffold of an invented natural state, 2023
Reactive dye on silk, unique
130 x 173 cm



A light image cast on a dark screen (I), 2023
UV print on brushed aluminium in artist's frame; unique
21 x 27 cm



Forget your civic past and social status, 2023
Reactive dye on silk, unique
130 x 173 cm



A light image cast on a dark screen (II), 2023
UV print on brushed aluminium in artist's frame, unique 21 x 27 cm.



We are the womb of dialogue – the drama proper, 2023
Reactive dye on silk, unique
130 x 173 cm





A light image cast on a dark screen (III), 2023
UV print on brushed aluminium in artist's frame, unique 21 x 27 cm



More important than action itself, 2023
Reactive dye on silk, unique
130 x 173 cm



Dithyramb, 2023 for the British Red Cross Turkey-Syria Earthquake Appeal
4 colour risograph print on G. F Smith Accent 300gsm 29.7 x 42 cm
Edition of 25, printed by Glasney Print Centre
£30



For everything was simply a great, sublime, chorus, 2023
Reactive dye on silk, unique
130 x 173 cm









Kristian Day