
In this issue

Mary Ramsden

talks to Jonathan Stubbs about her recent solo exhibition at Pilar Corrias

Adham Faramawy

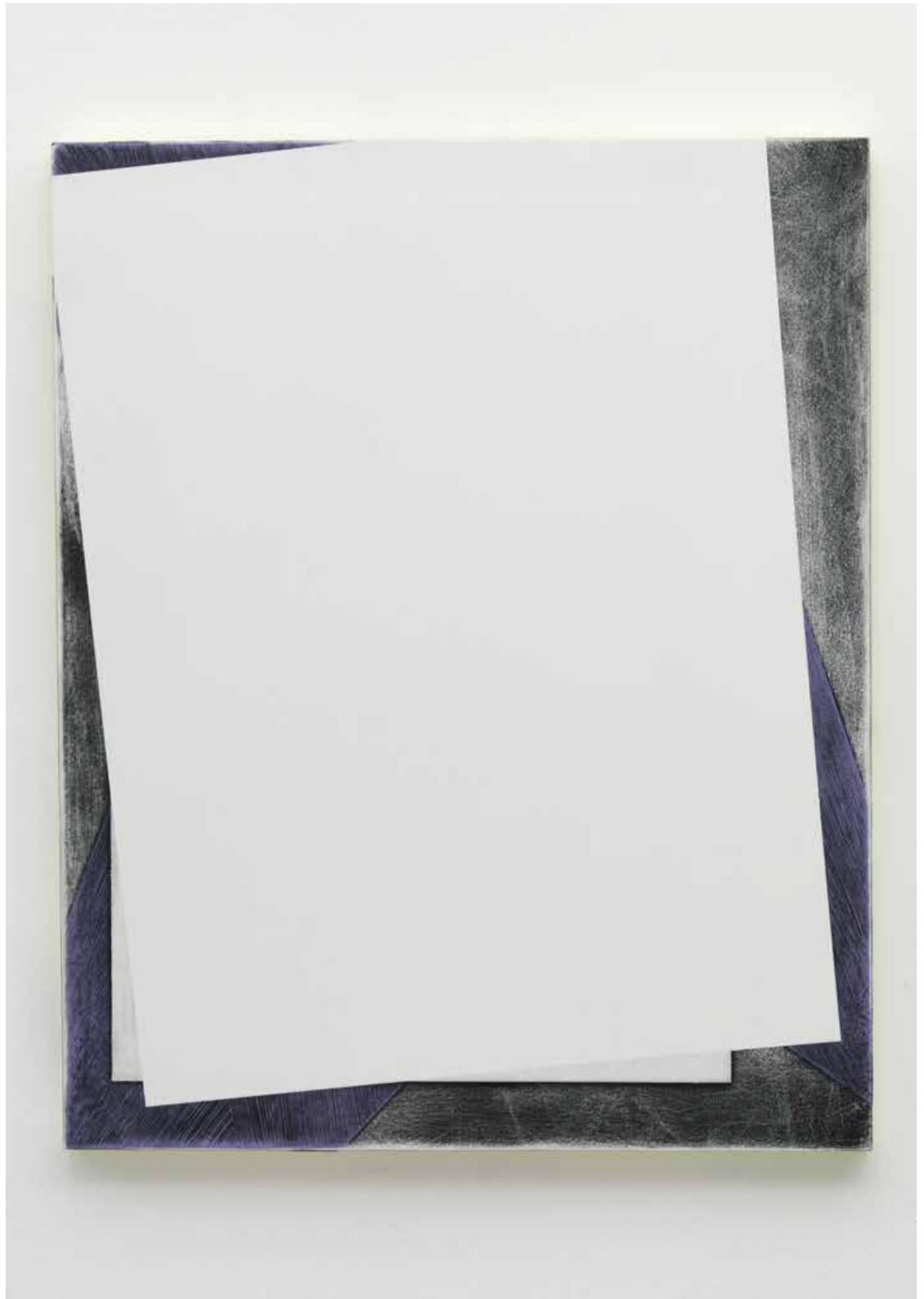
has launched a new app in conjunction with a symposium he is organising for the Schools

Molly Palmer

on the Schools autumn study trip to Istanbul

David Cooper

is preparing to start a new alumni programme later this year



Cover image: Mary Ramsden, *Search 'ways of waiting' 1*, 2015. Oil on board, 76 x 61 x 3.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery. Photo: Ken Adlard.

Right: Mary Ramsden "...this television is just a large, broken radio with abstract art on the front.", 2015. Oil on board, 2 parts: 50 x 40 x 3.5 cm (each) / 50 x 80 x 3.5 cm (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery. Photo: Ken Adlard.



Swipe

Mary Ramsden

Mary Ramsden graduated from the RA Schools in 2013, and is now represented by Pilar Corrias. She spoke to Jonathan Stubbs about her most recent solo presentation at their gallery on Eastcastle Street.

JS: One of the first things that strikes me is that there are varying qualities to the edges – sometimes, as in “...this television...” the edge is glowing like a back-lit screen. Whereas in *Lurid and Cute* the edge is almost obliterated by the mottled black. In a couple of works like *Big Hand*, the physical edge of the paint creeps on to the gallery wall, and in “...this television” the glowing edge throws light onto the wall. Have you started to think more about the paintings as objects – or at least present them with a greater consciousness of their physicality?

MR: All of the works for *Swipe* are on board so the weight and physicality of them is solid from the start and prevents them acting as a movable skin on a support. I work on the floor so I can get behind and around the panels more easily as lot of manual-handling happens in pushing them to where I want them, so I need them to be resilient throughout. This active approach breaks down any sort of hierarchy so the dynamic engagement is maintained. With canvas there is a lot more give so it sort of submits itself to the push and pull and loses its object quality in its slackening.

The edge of the board then instructs the viewer to watch a work in the same way it was put together, a reminder of its hardness and an effort to keep it active as you move about it. The neon edges also work to achieve an artificial hum so a work is always ‘on’. In the studio the boards are rarely laid out still for any length of time during their evolution and I want to present that restlessness in the way they are shown, sort of stop them from slowing down after they’ve left the working space.

JS: Again, thinking about the edge – a lot of the images are playing with the edge, the offset rectangles come closer to it and further away. Then in *Search 'ways of waiting'* the white rectangle slips of the edge of the picture plane. This make them look more like windows or openings rather than complete works. Are you thinking about what lies beyond the picture plane as much as what is in it?

MR: It's less about what is and isn't visible but more about the action of cropping and zooming. It's macro and micro so if there appears to be a lot

Mary Ramsden, *Lurid and Cute*, 2015. Oil on board, 25 x 18 x 3.5 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery. Photo: Ken Adlard.



Mary Ramsden, *Zerstörung*, 2015. Oil on board, 2 panels: 60 x 45 x 3.5 cm (each) / 60 x 90 x 3.5 cm (overall). Courtesy of the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery. Photo: Ken Adlard.



of information that has fallen off the edge of the board it could be that what you're looking at is just closer or a slice selected from a large whole. It's like peering in and only getting frames of what the light allows.

JS: Each painting looks like a process of discovering, sanding back, layers appearing and disappearing. Do you have a plan for each painting or are they very responsive to the making of them?

MR: The way the paint slips down the sides is significant because the horizontal drip (when a work is hung) appears to pin the work to the wall. Especially with the white works where the white drips are the bridge between a white form on the surface of the panel and the stretch of white wall where it lands.

And in terms of a plan the paintings are fairly instructive. I always set out with a specific idea of how things will develop but usually to make myself aware that in the process there was a real decision not to follow it. The connecting themes are the constant, so the larger ideas are where the plan is.

JS: There are varying aesthetics – sometimes you apply the paint clinically, coldly even. At other times, and I'm thinking of the work *Zerstörung* here, it looks like you have used your fingers to smudge the paint playfully. This contrast in the application of the paint suggests something that I know you have talked about in relation to this show – using the inspiration of digital images and screens. Can you talk a bit about how you see the tension between painting and digital image.

MR: Well in the case of the work you mentioned the marks are executed with the same lack of self-consciousness as the universal tech smear on your touchscreen, the ubiquitous handwriting of a

'slide to open' smudge on a mobile device. Within my own practice I am constantly referring back to my various rectangular screens to research, record, zoom and crop paintings. The space between the actual object and digital image is a very active one for me. So much so that the finger grease marks on the black mirror of my phone have found their way into my works. With *Zerstörung* the forms that overlay each other imply windows or tabs open on a desktop, temporarily masking information below. This human intervention on the pristine reflective rectangle is a repeated gesture that communicates a language between man and machine where we exercise our control and dominance, an instructive mark with a purpose and often an impatience.

JS: The triptych *Hold Still* interests me because it looks a little separate to the other works. For one, it is the only one across three panels, and also it seems to throw far more pictorial space into the work than the other work, which are more about surface, and what is immediately there in front of you – or not. Is this something you were looking to achieve, or was it more that the marks of the wide, flat brushstrokes started to suggest space and you went with it?

MR: If there is a sense of pictorial space here it is more about an investigation into how we read space within a window of sorts today, particularly in relation to the way we now register information within a digital framework and what that space can appear to be and isn't.

The black bands you refer to in this work are actually small brushstrokes repeated over and over side by side and so appear to be made with a large brush. In this way they are very much about the repetition of an action on a flat surface and the subtleties in the paint drag that appear taut and then slack in parts, again like the imperfections that

emerge in a zoom and can reduce the depth of field.

JS: Interestingly, the illusion of space breaks down the closer you get to the painting, and it becomes more about surface again. Do you think this is something you will explore more – the breakdown between surface and illusion?

MR: Illusion is a difficult word. I find it playful to describe different surfaces with paint where they don't represent an object pictorially but just appear made of that stuff, so they just 'do' table top or pavement but it's a reminder of a finish not an illusion. Sometimes the sanded layers of paint when excavated, appear to mimic denim or a pixelated image but this isn't about any kind of trickery just more about connections in the different parts of the work. Spatially I like to keep things upfront.

JS: The other work that starts to push in a slightly different direction as well is *Lurid and Cute* – the paint mark in this one starts to hover somewhere between a mark and a thing.

MR: Yeah those are the naked paintings or 'licks' as I like to call them. The smaller ones are 'tight licks' and are more about a rehearsed gesture and the loaded weight of the artist's hand. They are all about the marks you aren't 'allowed' to make and perhaps permit elements that are silenced in other works, the ones that got away.

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12 – 28 June
RA Schools

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Patrons Preview

Thursday 11 June
5.30 – 6.30pm
Free, but please RSVP

Opening Reception

Thursday 11 June
6.30 – 8.30pm
Silver, Gold & Platinum Patrons are invited to attend 4, 6 or all ORs respectively as part of their annual membership benefits

Inside the RA Schools Show

Wednesday 6 May
6.30 – 8.30pm
Life Room, RA Schools

Patrons will have the opportunity to hear directly from four graduating students as they prepare to stage their final year exhibition. Introduced by Brian Griffiths, Senior Tutor.
Free, but please RSVP

Annual Lecture & Dinner: Frank Stella Hon RA

Monday 11 May
Lecture 6.30pm, Dinner 8.30pm
Royal Institution & RA Schools

This year we welcome the legendary artist Frank Stella in conversation with Dr David Anfam. Patrons are invited to join Frank Stella and RA Schools students for dinner after the lecture back in the RA Schools.

The RA Schools Public Programme is supported by the David Lean Foundation

Lecture £16 per person, Lecture & Dinner £45 per person

Hide and Seek: Drawings by Eileen Cooper RA

Tuesday 7 July
8.45 – 10am
Keeper's House Entrance

Eileen Cooper became an RA in 2000 and in 2010 was elected Keeper of the RA, the first woman in this role. As Keeper, Eileen is the only Academician with a studio on site. She invites Patrons for a tour of her new exhibition and an exclusive drinks reception in her beautiful private studio.
£10 per person, payment on RSVP

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