

## **PHOEBE UNWIN**

### **FEELINGS AND OTHER FORMS**

**04 September - 12 October 2008**

Wilkinson Gallery is pleased to present a second solo show from the London based artist Phoebe Unwin.

As a painter Unwin manages to break free from the weight of the medium's long history to create works that experiment with and push the supposed limits and boundaries of paint. Eschewing physical source material, photographic or otherwise, her works attempt to conquer the blankness of the empty canvas without the safety of self-imposed limits of form or motif. Unwin is not seeking some ultimate goal in the practice, more excitedly questioning the length and breadth of reaction that can be elicited with pigment on surface. Each work a unique experiment for the artist.

Ranging widely in its formal nature the exhibition includes wholly abstract washes of colour, part abstract portraiture, and minimal still lifes. The creative process is integral to the end product. Each work is a process in progress, a reaction to its previous counterpart; some starting with colour or texture and others with subject or shape. Worked out in books first and then transferred, adjusted and edited onto a multitude of differently sized and prepared canvases, the artist works prolifically, only to carefully edit the output before public consumption.

The diverse formal subject matter depicts the essence of the artist's personal emotion without ever troubling the viewer with the non-universal back-story. Emotions are set in the abstract. This is demonstrated with the deliberate and effective confusing of outlines and spaces allocated to different depicted objects, including people which distances the viewer's concentration from the actualities of subject matter. In withholding the specifics Unwin makes her work raise more questions than answers, taking the look of cinema without the latter's traditional constraint of having to tell a story.

Colour has long played a significant role in Unwin's life, having spent much of her formative childhood living near San Francisco, surrounded by the optimistic palette of the Californian landscape and the strong influence of Mexican culture which counteracted the overriding belief in monochrome of her British, European, birthplace. The world that these works inhabit now however has progressed from these early influences, imbuing the colour with a very adult emotional intensity.

Unwin attended Newcastle University (1998 – 2002) and the Slade School of Fine Art (2003 – 2005). Her first solo show, *The Grand and the Commonplace*, was held at Wilkinson in 2006 and since she has exhibited in group shows in Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Reykjavik and at Thomas Dane Gallery, London (all 2007). In that year she also had a major solo show at the Milton Keynes Gallery. She is currently exhibiting in a group show at Honor Fraser Gallery, Los Angeles. In September she is participating in a group show curated by Barry Schawbsky at Centre Cultural Andratx, Mallorca. Unwin was born in Cambridge in 1979 but now lives and works in London.

Accompanying the exhibition is a catalogue with a text by Jens Hoffman.