



Forest Painting, 2015, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm

Hanging Basket Phenotype, 2015, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm

MIMEI THOMPSON's interest lies in the unconscious mind, dream imagery and symbols—the way the everyday becomes fantastic. This exhibition's title, **The Year of Sleepwalking**, raises ideas of the hallucinatory imagination and the surreal landscape of dreams—places where reality slips in and out of focus.

At times we have a failure of recognition in front of the paintings and are confronted with a seemingly tachiste experiment. This is the painter following her craft and choosing her moment of engagement. It also underlines the evolution of each finished work involving the oil paint and its dissolving medium towards Thompson's characteristic immaculate surfaces, through layerings and subtractions.

She began her studies in photography before making painting her primary interest and there is a clear relationship with the way her subject-matter now materializes during her creative process and the manner in which a photographer's darkroom is the setting for the formation of images out of nothing other than prepared paper and fluid. This alchemy has remained. Thompson believes the fluid world of her paintings reflects the feeling that matter temporarily takes on certain forms, but that these are transient, and capable of shifting and morphing at any moment. This shape-shifting is connected to myths and magical thinking.

That the artist's subject matter is entirely commonplace reflects on our understanding of the wondrous—and terrible—nature of any being on this planet. Thompson gives weeds, bin-bags, pot plants and woodlands epic status through translation and re-presentation, whilst also expressing 'interconnectedness' linking amoebic slime, our smartphones, a dying star.





Pavement Leaves 2, 2015, oil on canvas, 60 x 50 cm

Woodland, 2015, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



The artist's natural world is resolutely urban at source; even a forest is an industrially-managed example. This brings together her ideas of 'nature' which in her work represents a site of authenticity, or a place of origin, longed for, but knowingly unattainable. It is in the area of slippage between the desire for something natural and the actuality that we are inescapably in a man-made culture that her subject matter resides, synthesizing the everyday and the sublime. Hanging baskets/bonsai trees/uprooted weeds and urban binbags all express a humorous meeting point for the prosaic and the transcendent.

The contained and the uprooted plants have a personal significance for Thompson, who feels no singular cultural–geographical attachment or identity herself, having lived through a trail of transplantations from one country to the next. Born in Japan to a Chilean mother and an American father, she lived in the Sudan before moving to the UK. These cultural leaps enable her to perceive the mundane and to transform it into something alien, estranged, other, sublime or ridiculous.

Mimei Thompson studied at Glasgow School of Art, Central St Martins and The RCA, London (MA, 2005). She has participated in Jerwood Contemporary Painters, been commissioned by the Contemporary Art Society, and is included in the Arts Council Collection. She recently had a solo show at Trade Gallery, Nottingham. She lives and works in London.

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