

Burleigh Street Townhouse

12 Burleigh Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2E 7PX

www.12BurleighStreet.com

The Water Drinkers

14th – 26th October 2019

Crystal Fischetti

Harry Rüdham

Lee Kay-Barry

Press Release

Burleigh Street Townhouse is pleased to present *The Water Drinkers*, an exhibition of paintings by Crystal Fischetti, Harry Rüdham and Lee Kay-Barry, curated by Eleanor Stephenson. The title stems from Henri Murger's semi-autobiographical collection of short stories, first published in 1849 as *Scenes de la vie Boheme* and later as *La Vie de Bohème*. Murger claims that due to the improvised conditions of his Bohemian community of artists, writers and poets, living in the garrets of Paris, they could not afford wine and so, became the Water Drinkers of the Latin Quarter.

Crystal Fischetti, Harry Rüdham and Lee Kay-Barry live and work together in a Georgian Townhouse, a stone throws away from Sherlock Holmes's old haunt on Baker Street. This truly unique Bohemian style of living has led to an unconscious collaboration between these three artists. Presented across three floors of Burleigh Street Townhouse is a body of work which share flickers of each other's artistic identity: brushes exchanged, palettes negotiated and portraits of another other interwoven.

Murger's book became the basis for Puccini's masterpiece, *La bohème* and later into the Broadway musical *Rent*, a 1990s reinterpretation of a familiar narrative – a group of impoverished young artists sharing their passionate struggle for artistic enlightenment. Performance is an important theme to both these artists lives, work and in particular this exhibition at Burleigh Street Townhouse - tucked between London's West End.

Crystal Fischetti trained as a professional dancer for two decades, her performative muscle memory is visible in her broad gestures and expressive relationship with colour. In Fischetti's installation *As Above So Below*, the artist challenges the viewers phenomenological relationship to the work, offering a space-time experience in which one becomes part of the painting and part of her dance.

Harry Rüdham plays with performance through a more theoretical vein. Two years ago, Rüdham spent a year studying Universität der Künste in Berlin, an experience which transformed his practice from dark figuration to large-scale abstractions, employing a musical palette which sings of his happy place of being. The small figures seen scattered across his canvas are the nude bathers who he so often saw by the lakes and swimming pools of Berlin. Rüdham depicts a dialogue, a performance of seeing and being seen.

Lee Kay-Barry is fascinated by movement, in particular bodily interaction, touch and departure. He strives to capture this tender moment of physical connection through complex compositions and rich narratives. *The Pink Room* and *Dance, Monkey, Dance* directly play with the theme of performance, the latter aptly responding to the Street Performers of Covent Garden.

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Open Daily: 10am-6pm

Saturday & Sunday: Appointment Only

Enquires: Eleanor@12BurleighStreet.com