

FRED INGRAMS

Fragile Places

20 Nov - 8 Dec 2024

Artist's talk Saturday 30 Nov, 2pm



ART SPACE & STUDIO



Fred Ingrams was born in 1964. He studied at Camberwell and St. Martins School of Art.

For ten years he painted above the Coach & Horses pub in Soho, whilst exhibiting in various central London galleries.

He has worked as a graphic designer and art director on many magazines including: Sunday Times, The Field, Tatler, Vogue and House & Garden.

In 1998 he moved to Norfolk where he paints and draws both nudes and landscapes from life. He spent many years painting the Fens, the Norfolk Coast and northern Scotland's Flow Country.

Fred was shortlisted for the Rise Art Prize 2018.

Ingrams' compositions are beautifully organised and the colour schemes are balanced and verdant. It would be possible to read his paintings at the level of aesthetic appreciation of the landscape, drawing on landscape as a historical genre of documentation of natural beauty. However, they are complicated through their site-specificity. In this exhibition, the locations shown are The Flow Country (northern Scotland) and the Norfolk Coast, both fragile and beautiful places, susceptible to change through climate conditions in flux and direct human interventions. Some of the sites are soon to be populated by wind turbines, some will soon be underwater due to rising sea levels. So, in the act of forming these painted images, Ingrams is negotiating with difficult temporal and environmental factors. His paintings don't only serve to beautifully depict countryside views, but document spaces that have a vulnerability and layers of political, environmental meaning.

These works focus primarily on the natural landscape, the majority of each composition is dominated by painterly swathes of colour that depict areas undisturbed by human presence. Residential or farm buildings in the images are incidental: small, geometrically structured additions that point subtly to human activity. For his creative working process, he enjoys isolation and seeks out quiet spaces to find inspiration to paint images of beauty. Ingrams sees the underlying context of land politics as ever-present, so in his paintings he is not aiming to communicate a specific message in reference to this but opens up a site for the viewers' engagement. With the context of the climate crisis, the choice to paint landscape is imbued with urgency, but in the case of these works it is up to the viewer whether or not to interpret the painted landscapes at face value. This focus on the gentle beauty of the sites lends itself to an open dialogue between the artist and the viewer, rather than the artist assuming a didactic position.

Ingrams cites Richard Diebenkorn and Caspar David Friedrich as his most profound influences. Looking at post-war abstractionist Diebenkorn's work alongside Ingrams', there is a shared sensibility towards the geometry and heightened use of colour in his softly geometric American landscapes. An admiration for German Romantic painter Friedrich's contemplative relationship with nature and reverence for natural landscapes is visible in Ingrams' express intention to convey beautiful landscapes with a distinct absence of figures. The influences of Diebenkorn's mid-century visuals, early 19th century Romantic expression and Ingrams' situated practice coalesce in this exhibition of quietly beautiful landscapes.

Fragile Places brings together Fred Ingrams' paintings of The Flow Country and the Norfolk Coast, featuring works from the past few years and some made as recently as October this year. His consistency of expression combines with his individual aesthetic relationships with the landscapes to form a body of work that is harmonious, while each painting maintains its unique character.

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