

CHARMAINE WATKISS & ANDREW PIERRE HART
THE ABSTRACT TRUTH OF THINGS

23 July - 29 August 2020

Tiwani Contemporary is delighted to present a two-person exhibition by British artists Charmaine Watkiss and Andrew Pierre Hart. Comprising new and recent work by the artists, the exhibition features drawing by Watkiss and painting by Hart. In addition, the exhibition features a soundscape.

The lockdown in the UK made for an opportunity for the artists to meet and engage on social media platforms where they conducted a series of discussions to develop the meeting point of their collaboration: the colour blue and the sound of Jazz - markers of innovation and invention in American, African and Caribbean diaspora histories. The title of the show riffs on the name of a 1997 exhibition *The Blues and the Abstract Truth* by American-born artist David Hammons who derived it in turn from a 1961 album by jazz saxophonist Oliver Nelson.

In their exhibition, Charmaine Watkiss and Andrew Pierre Hart acknowledge an artistic lineage with Hammons and emphasise the significance and relevance of the cultural histories and musical processes that generate blue and the sound of Jazz. However, the artists follow distinctive strategies with substantive outcomes individual to their own practices and discoverable throughout the show.

Charmaine Watkiss addresses themes including diaspora, ritual, tradition, ancestry and cosmology. Her interest in the usage of blue stems from her research into the long history of indigo including its production on the plantations of colonial America and Caribbean and sacred use in ancient African cultures, particularly with reference to the funerary rites, spiritual beliefs and cosmologies of West African and ancient Egyptian cultures. She draws connections between ancient tradition, knowledge and our lives - asking what role ritual and its practice plays in contemporary experience.

Andrew Pierre Hart explores the symbiotic relationship between sound and painting through ongoing rhythmic research and play between improvised and spontaneous generative processes. His practice considers the many formalities and dialogues around painting. His interests include collective memory, movement, time, subjectivity, pictorial space, and the circle.

After the UK lockdown in the run-up to the exhibition, the artists shared music, dialogue, visual ideas fostering trust, rapport and experimentation all in a freestyle approach determined by but not limited to chance, play, repetition and, doodling. They have both influenced each other to make new work via each other's way of thinking. The artists came to consider the preparatory process as a meta-work in itself albeit one divided by distance and the internet. Unsurprisingly, they suggest their joint presentation is akin to a counterpoint duet that calls and responds, synchronises rhythms and abstractions, movements and, gestures. In it there are literal blues – cyans and crepuscular hues, the musical blues – artist Denzil Forrester's 80s dancehall scenes and Hoxton Square nightclub The Blue Note and, historical blues - indigo dyeing traditions.

Encouraging subjective readings of their work in the exhibition, Watkiss and Hart explore and hint towards ideas around esoteric diaspora histories, the spiritualism intrinsic to Jazz, the openness of blue and its myriad readings throughout history, senses of Egyptology, symbol mysteries and gestural notions of the figure in space. All this attempts to send the viewer to a space that has not yet been written, a future maybe or even, a retelling or shaping of the past.